Oxfordshire Guardian

Didcot, Wallingford, Thame & Henley-on-Thames

Thursday, December 14 - Wednesday, December 20, 2017 oxfordshireguardian.co.uk Free

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Volunteers' gift of Christmas cheer to vulnerable families

By Eva Astrienidou

A GROUP of volunteers showed a true sense of community by treating 43 vulnerable and isolated families to a warm meal and gifts just in time for Christmas.

The Balsam Family Project laid on a two-course lunch with turkey and all the trimmings to around 175 people from Didcot and surrounding areas over the weekend.

The event at Didcot Civic Hall was made possible thanks to a collaboration with local charities and businesses to ensure the families they work with had 'a day to remember'.

In addition to the hearty food, volunteers from Didcot-based Secret Santa were also there to hand out wrapped gifts, while Didcot Foodbank donated festive hampers worth £2,000 to £3,000 for the families to have something to take home with them.

Children at the event also left with a book each, donated by Bright Horizons Nurseries.

Alex Walker, Balsam founder and project manager, said: "For a charity that aims to bring families – and family members – closer together, nothing could be more rewarding than looking out on a sea of happy faces and watching people enjoy being with and around loved ones at Christmas time.

"We believe in the value of every adult and child and seek to encourage a sense of worth and value that parents can pass on to their own children."

Families enjoyed a lunch and presents thanks to the Balsam Family Project event at Didcot Civic Hall at the weekend

Didcot Mayor Jackie Billington was there to help serve up the traditional fare, while a host of entertainment, including singer and guitarist John Hobbs and children's entertainers, lifted the audience's spirits.

The Balsam Family Project aims to provide support that tackles the root causes of family and community breakdown, even providing parents with guidance on how to improve their parenting skills.

The charity runs college courses to help parents practise newly-learned skills, many of whom were handed certificates during the day.

One of the recipients, single mum Amanda, said: "I'm overwhelmed with the kind words said about me and I'll be volunteering for the charity after I complete my course."

Thomas brings in Christmas

FAMILIES braved the snow and icy weather to enjoy the company of Thomas the Tank Engine and Father Christmas as Didcot Railway Centre hosted its Christmas special on Saturday and Sunday.

The Fat Controller supervised throughout the day, taking photos with admiring children and helping young friends on their journey to visit Father Christmas in his grotto.

The events will run this weekend and next weekend, with Thomas' last scheduled run at 3pm on each day.

For more information, visit tinyurl.com/ycmbqh5a.

The Fat Controller greets Taylor and Lily who came with their family from Birmingham, wearing festive coloured coats and hats
Picture: *Didcot Railway Centre*

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Further savings of £21m needed to meet budget

By Eva Astreinidou

OXFORDSHIRE is a step closer to reaching the end of a planned 'programme of savings' but has warned a further £21million must also be cut.

Since austerity began in 2010, Oxfordshire County Council will have found savings of £398m to date.

Last week it added 2021-22 to that timeframe and announced further savings of £21m were needed.

The leader of the council, Councillor Ian Hudspeth said: "Having made difficult decisions in previous years we are now nearer to the end of our programme of savings than the start. However there are still some savings to make.

"We are a council that spends a great deal of its budget on caring for those in greatest need - striving to give every child a good start in life and enabling older and disabled people to live independently. That continues to be our focus."

The council has identified that it needs to plug a gap of around £9m in children's services due to population growth and increases in the number of children in care. But it says a new strategy to reduce children in care and give families support at an earlier stage is planned to balance out the savings in the long-term.

There are also further pressures on adult social care, which mean that more than £10m will need to be found elsewhere.

The council has also outlined several improvements, which include cancelling a previously agreed saving of £1.97m in which grass cutting services were to be axed.

In addition, it is hoped that £940,000 will be used to carry out work on cycle lanes and bus laybys including sign clearance and line painting in rural areas.

An amount of £350,000 has also been set aside ahead of new building regulations after the tragic blaze at Grenfell Tower.

The council also wants to spend £850,000 to create a team that will look at new ways to generate capital and look at investment opportunities.

As agreed in February, the budget proposals also include a council tax increase by 4.99 per cent, of which three per cent will go towards providing adult social care services.

The county council will meet today (Thursday) to discuss ways the books can be balanced before a formal budget-setting meeting in February.

To comment and see a full list of the proposals before January 8, visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/budget

Hammer-wielding men target OAP in aggravated attack

THREE balaclava-clad men armed with hammers broke into a house and attacked a man in his eighties with a plate.

Police are appealing for witnesses following the aggravated burglary in Oxford on December 5.

At around 4.20pm, the three men broke into a property in Hill View, Sandhills, armed with hammers.

One of the men struck one of the occupants, a man aged in his eighties, over the head with a plate.

The victim managed to fight him off with a chair.

The offenders ran out of the property into a waiting car which drove off at speed, narrowly avoiding a man who was crossing the road pushing a pushchair.

Two of the offenders are described as white and the other was black.

No one was injured during the incident.

If you can help, call 101.

Police reissue appeal after possible sighting of UEFA boss

POLICE are continuing a cross-border investigation to find a missing former UEFA boss who was last seen in October.

Bernard Ross, 51, *pictured*, is believed to have travelled from Oxford to the south of France on October 18 – but officers say there was a report of a possible sighting last week.

Police are now re-appealing to the public for help following the report from Nyon, Switzerland, on Friday.

Mr Ross is described as 5ft 7ins tall, of medium build, he is a fluent French speaker and it is believed he may have been using a bicycle to travel around.

He is believed to have been on foot on Friday.

Thames Valley Police Chief Superintendent Christian Bunt said: "We are continuing our investigation to locate Mr Ross as we have increasing concerns for his welfare. It is believed he does not have access to the medication he requires.

"I would like to reiterate that if anyone sees Mr Ross, they should call police immediately so that we can check that he is safe and well."

Last month, his wife Jacinta issued a plea for him to come home in time for Christmas, saying his family missed him 'desperately'.

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Sarah Fletcher, Mushroom Souffle; Thomas Wylam, Cupcycl; Jemima King, Richardsons Chartered Accountants; Jackie Jarvis, sales coach; and Owen Mendez, commercial director, CarmichaelUK

Cup recycling idea brings new business

A YEAR ago Thomas Wylam won a Dragon's Den style business contest with his cup recycling plan.

Over the past 12-months the Princes Risborough Upper School pupil has been developing his idea with mentors from local businesses.

Now the recycling scheme Cupcycl, which provides the infrastructure to allow people to drop disposable drink cups in collection-points, so they can be recycled into new products, is to be rolled out in Thame.

Thomas said disposable cups have a special wax coating to waterproof them so cannot be easily recycled and take decades to rot in landfill.

By collecting the cups at collection-points they can be recycled and made into something else.

Thomas said: "Thame's Young Entrepreneur Competition gave me the opportunity to take an idea and run with it.

"It's fantastic to have gone through this process and get to where I am now, with a project that brings something unique to the local area.

"This helped me develop my scheme so that I could exhibit at Thame Food Festival, where I recycled the cups of over 1,200 visitors to my stand.

"I'm delighted with the interest I've had from other local event organisers, who may run this scheme at their events."

Last year's contest was organised as part of Small Business Saturday.

Young entrepreneurs aged under 30 who had a business idea they wanted to develop were urged to enter the competition to win £500 cash plus business mentoring.

Driver freed from flipped car

A TRAPPED driver had to be cut free after their car overturned in icy conditions.

The vehicle flipped on the A417 in East Challow, south Oxfordshire, at around 7am on Saturday.

Fire crews from Faringdon and Didcot used hydraulic cutting equipment to free the casualty, who was taken to hospital by paramedics.

The driver's injuries were not life threatening.

Conditions on the roads were icy and gritters attended the area shortly afterwards.

A fire service spokesperson said: "The driving conditions have been very difficult throughout the county.

"Icy roads will cause vehicles to lose traction causing drivers to struggle to maintain control of the vehicle.

"I urge all drivers to reduce speeds in these conditions and allow more time to complete journeys."

Firefighters freed the trapped driver on Saturday morning

Sex abuser's sentence increased as more victims come forward

By Owen Hughes

A MAN has been convicted of more historic sex offences after two men came forward after almost 50 years having recognised their abuser in the news.

Terry Haynes, 75, formerly of Matthews Way, Wootton, who was convicted in 2014 of raping his daughter, has now been jailed for a further six years after being found guilty of inflicting sexual abuse on two boys in the 1960s and 1970s.

A jury found Haynes unanimously guilty of one count of gross indecency with a child, and eight counts of indecent assault of a boy, in Tubney Woods, now in Oxfordshire but at the time in Berkshire.

The conviction follows a five-day trial at Reading Crown Court that ended on Monday, December 4.

The two victims cannot be named, although the investigating officer, Detective Sergeant Sarah Berry of Force CID, said that the two men came forward after recognising Haynes on the news.

She said: "The victims recognised Terry Haynes when they saw him in the news in 2014 after he was convicted of other sexual offences.

"The victims showed tremendous courage after fifty years to come forward and report these heinous crimes to the police."

She added: "I hope that Haynes' sentence will give the victims some resolution, although I know that they have been hugely affected by these terrible crimes."

The jail term is to run consecutively with the 15 years' imprisonment Haynes is currently serving after being convicted at Oxford Crown Court in April 2014 for 12 counts of rape, 11 counts of indecent assault and one count of attempted rape.

During the trial he was also acquitted of five further counts of rape.

The victim of all but one of the 2014 convictions is his daughter, Teresa Haynes, who waived her right to anonymity to reveal that she had been raped by her father since the age of five.

Haynes' original 15 year sentence was reduced from a starting point of 18 years in light of his ill health.

He was also convicted of two indecent assaults against young men in 1962.

InBrief

Vehicle crimes rise

POLICE are looking for witnesses following a 'concerning' number of vehicle incidents in south Oxfordshire.

The offences, four thefts of motor vehicles and one vehicle which was interfered with, happened overnight between December 2 and 3.

Three of the vehicles were taken from properties on Ginge Road, Ginge. One of the vehicles was stolen from Foliat Drive, Wantage, and the other vehicle which was tampered with was also in Foliat Drive.

Two of the stolen vehicles have since been located. However, one red Berlingo van and a green Kawasaki quad bike are still outstanding.

Descriptions of the offenders are not available at this time.

PC Matthew Holland said: "This is a concerning volume of crime to occur overnight in these areas, and we believe the suspects are organised with regards to their offending."

If you can help, call 101.

Hot ashes warning

DISCARDED hot ashes caused a shed fire at a house in Didcot.

The blaze broke out at 11.15am on Saturday in Haydon Road.

No one was hurt and fire crews from Didcot and Abingdon extinguished the blaze using high-pressure hoses.

Investigations revealed that the fire started in a wheelie bin next to the shed where hot ashes from an outdoor fire had been thrown away the previous day.

The occupiers were alerted to the fire when items in the shed started bursting loudly.

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Scouts gifts of food for those in need at Christmas

A GROUP of scouts was inspired to help a food bank with boxes full of donations after hearing how it can help people who are struggling.

The 30th Abingdon Beaver scouts has been carrying out good deeds during the last few months to earn as many items as possible to donate to the Abingdon Food Bank before Christmas.

The group, all aged six and seven, was inspired to help the charity after its organisers ran an evening in September to show them why the food bank is needed and what type of food is best to donate to help create balanced meals.

The group of young scouts undertook several good deeds at home to collect more items, including washing up, looking after their pets, finishing their homework without moaning and laying the table for dinner, to name but a few.

New headmaster for prep school

THE Manor Preparatory School in Abingdon has appointed a new headmaster to replace the retiring Piers Heyworth.

Alastair Thomas, *pictured*, will take the reins from January following Mr Heyworth's retirement this Christmas.

Mr Thomas, who read French at King's College London, was most recently headmaster at a prep school in Herefordshire and prior to that deputy head at a prep school in Berkshire.

Mr Thomas said: "I believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their potential in all fields of education and this is what attracted me to The Manor.

"The Manor has offered a wonderful education to many children and I am very much looking forward to continuing that tradition while enabling the school to evolve further."

The Manor welcomes girls aged two to 11 and boys aged two to seven.

From September boys will be able to progress through the school to the end of Year 6 alongside the girls.

Mr Thomas added: "The opportunity for me to lead the school as it embarks on this exciting new chapter to becoming fully co-educational is one that I did not want to miss."

Alastair Thomas is taking over at The Manor Preparatory School in the new year

Retail and residential phase opens at GWP

By Samantha McGregor

A MAJOR phase of a residential and shopping development at Great Western Park has been officially completed.

The £15million development includes an 11,000 sq ft Asda supermarket, shops, a pub, children's nursery, chemist, dental surgery, care facility and 20 apartments.

Among businesses already signed up are pizza firm Domino's, Costa Coffee, an estate agent, vets' practice and a hairdresser.

Marston's has bought the pub, while Bright Horizons has purchased the nursery plot.

Retirement house builder McCarthy and Stone has delivered the extra care housing.

Called the District Centre, it is part of plans for a major development at the Great Western Park site which will eventually feature 3,300 homes.

Scott Davidson, managing director of property developer Henry Davidson Developments, said: "We are delighted to announce practical completion of the District Centre at Didcot.

The Asda supermarket is a welcome new facility

"It is an important part of the wider Great Western Park development and, with a great range of retail occupiers, it will prove to be a real asset.

"There has been a lot of interest in its progress since the plans were announced, so it is very satisfying to deliver the much-needed local centre."

Construction of Great Western Park began in 2011 and so far, more than 1,600 homes are occupied.

Andrew Hill, senior contracts manager at building firm Stepnell, which constructed the District Centre, said: "We are delighted to have completed this exciting new community hub which provides a dynamic new focal point in the District for local people to meet, shop and live."

The entire project is expected to be finished in 2022 and will also include three schools – a primary and secondary school and university technical college, leisure and sports facilities, allotments and community open space.

InBrief

Poppy box stolen

A CHARITY poppy box was stolen from a petrol station in Wallingford in the same week as Remembrance Sunday.

Police have now released CCTV images and are looking for witnesses following the incident on November 8 at the Esso garage on Station Road.

The incident took place at around 11.25pm, when a man, accompanied by a white woman with blonde hair, aged in her twenties, entered the service station and stole a charity poppy box.

If you can help, call 101.

Faulty fridge fire

A FAULTY fridge is the likely cause of a garage fire that broke out in Grove last week, according to the fire service.

Firefighters worked in cramped conditions as they tackled the Cane Lane blaze at 8.25pm on Friday.

No one was hurt.

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News

Pictures: *Oxford Medical Illustration*

Team of the year went to the Trauma Unit Relocation Team; top right, Anne Marie Frohock was the award for excellence winner while the supporter of the year award, bottom right, was awarded posthumously to Liberty, who raised £11,000 for Oxford Children's Hospital after being treated for a rare form of bone cancer. Liberty sadly passed away shortly after the nomination, aged just 14

Honours for hospital staff at awards night

By Eva Astreinidou

DOCTORS and nurses from Oxford hospitals swapped scrubs for formal wear at a special awards ceremony honouring their achievements over the last year.

Medics attended the annual Staff Recognition Awards at Oxford Town Hall last week, where winners and runners up were picked from more than 600 nominations.

All eight categories featured in the ceremony were designed to celebrate the excellent contribution they had made to patient care and working life at Oxford University hospitals throughout the year.

One of the night's winners was Anne Marie Frohock, an advanced paediatric diabetes dietitian, who received the award for excellence for her work setting up a specialised service for young, athletic patients struggling to manage their Type 1 diabetes.

She said: "I feel so humble and honoured to receive the award. It was a wonderful, positive evening and incredibly inspiring to hear what others around the trust have achieved."

The trust's IT department scooped the 'highly commended' accolade in the Team of the Year category for their dedication to providing high quality cyber security which protected the Trust from the nationwide cyber attack in May.

The Patients' Choice Award, which was launched at last year's ceremony, went to craniofacial specialist nurse, Kari Ashton.

Her nominator, Sarah, said: "Kari is a wonderful lady. She listened to our concerns every step of the way. Her impact on our family was huge."

Other highlights included a festive opening performance from St Joseph's School Choir, the brand new Chairman's Award and a photography slideshow finale showcasing the best moments from the evening.

High vis message about site safety

YOUNGSTERS in Didcot received a special lesson about the importance of health and safety from a national housebuilder.

Pupils from Ladygrove Park Primary School learnt about the potential risks and hazards on and around building sites in a special interactive assembly last week.

In the lesson led by Miller Homes' health, safety and environmental advisor, Alec Arnold, the children aged seven to 11 also learnt how homes are built.

Mr Arnold said: "Working with local schools enables us to give youngsters a fun and informative insight into why they should stay away from building sites, as well as teaching them about how modern homes are built.

Miller Homes' health and safety advisor Alec Arnold with some of the children from Ladygrove Park Primary School

"It's always fantastic to see the children keen to get involved."

The school in Avon Way is located close to the housebuilder's Bradbery Gardens development.

Carrie Barringer, inclusion manager at the school, said: "It was brilliant to see everyone having so much fun, the children particularly liked trying on the high-vis jackets and hard hats."

Pupils' crowning glory with roles in blockbuster drama

By Samantha McGregor

FOR a year pupils have kept tight-lipped about their role in an award-winning blockbuster drama.

Now pupils from Kingham Hill School, near Chipping Norton can shout from the rooftops about their part in Netflix show The Crown.

More than 80 pupils from the independent school were cast in the series.

The students appear alongside former Doctor Who star, Matt Smith, who plays Prince Philip.

Season two of the Golden Globe winning drama was released last week and the pupils will finally get a chance to see themselves on television.

The show is a biographical story about the reign of Queen Elizabeth II and stars Claire Foy as the Queen and John Lithgow as Winston Churchill.

Last December, 82 Kingham Hill boys, aged 11 to 18, joined Matt Smith, on location at a Cotswold estate to film scenes for episode nine in the second series.

The boys were transformed from 21st century students into pupils from the 1930s and 1960s to play school friends and peers of Princes Philip and Charles.

The budding actors got to experience the working life of professionals when they had their hair styled and costumes fitted by the on-set team, before taking their turn in front of the bright lights and cameras.

Pupil Felix Parkinson, who is in Year 11, spoke about the experience of filming on a star-studded set.

He said: "Working on a film set is quite an experience; it is unlike anything I've ever done before.

"The early wake up calls were worth it for the chance of being on the show.

"I will never forget it and it is certainly something different to have on my CV."

The pupils were cast following successful auditions at Kingham Hill School's drama studio in November 2016.

Kingham Hill School pupils were transformed into pupils from the 1930s and 1960s and right, second deputy Rob Jones with Matt Smith who plays Prince Philip and pupil Alex Jones, one of those lucky enough to be cast

Warnings and advice as severe weather strikes

HEAVY snowfall and icy conditions caused major disruption across roads, households and schools in Oxfordshire.

The public were advised not to travel unless absolutely necessary while hundreds of homes experienced a loss of power.

More than 90 schools across the county were also affected, with some imposing a partial closure or later opening time. Many closed completely on Monday and Tuesday, due to safety concerns, hazardous driving conditions and lack of staff availability.

Scottish and Southern Electric said homes in Grove, Faringdon and Kidlington were still experiencing power problems on Monday, more than 24 hours after the first snow fell.

Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach Oxford suspended all services on Monday.

All 25 county council gritters worked through from 3am – gritting all A-roads, B-roads and some C-roads.

Paul Wilson, the council's winter operations manager, said: "Gritting and snowploughing helps keep the main roads clear but it doesn't turn December into July. We would ask people to drive very carefully."

Bin collections were also affected in South and West Oxfordshire on Monday but a South Oxfordshire District Council spokesperson tweeted that most side streets were too dangerous for their 26 tonne trucks.

News

New head to boost county healthcare

By Eva Astreinidou

A NEW CEO will be taking on the responsibility of helping develop healthcare in Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group has announced Louise Patten is taking on the role of interim CEO, starting on January 1.

The decision to find a permanent leader has been deferred until next year, following the retirement of David Smith earlier this year.

Ms Patten said: "I am really looking forward to working with colleagues in Oxfordshire. I hope the experience I bring will enhance the plans for transforming health and social care services in Oxfordshire."

In the past few years, Ms Patten has been involved in federating NHS Aylesbury Vale and NHS Chiltern CCGs and further developing collaborative working in the Buckinghamshire health and care system.

In that time, she led a project in which Buckinghamshire become one of the first eight NHS Accountable Care Systems being set up across the country to provide better coordinated care between GPs and hospitals, physical and mental healthcare and social care.

She added: "Patients want to see organisations working together as one body responsible for their health and care, getting the best outcomes and offering value for the money we have available."

Ms Patten will keep working in her current role as chief officer at NHS Aylesbury Vale and NHS Chiltern CCGs in Buckinghamshire.

Dr Kiren Collison, clinical chair of Oxfordshire CCG, said: "Louise will bring a wealth of experience which will help Oxfordshire drive forward its plans for more collaborative working between health and social care providers."

Snow show for animals

IT seems snow is a fascination whether you're a child or an animal at a wildlife park.

And these furry and feathered friends at Cotswolds are no exception as they ventured out into the white stuff on Sunday.

But they weren't the only ones getting used to different surroundings as the park also welcomed a baby antelope.

A zookeeper has stepped in to help raise female calf Autumn who was sadly rejected by her mother, one of a breeding pair of dwarf antelope species Kirk's Dik-dik.

Jade Stott took on the role of surrogate mother, hand-rearing the newborn for the last two months to give her the best chance of survival.

Describing her experience, she said: "It's been hard work but a real joy watching her defy the odds and develop into a curious, playful and occasionally cheeky little character."

Initially, Jade bottle-fed the youngster beginning at 6.30am and continuing feeds every few hours throughout the day, through to 11pm.

Autumn is now fully weaned and is currently eating smaller versions of the adult diet of fruit and veg.

The park issued a notice to say it would be closed due to extreme weather conditions until at least Saturday, but will update the general public if the situation changes.

Flamingoes, a red panda, a capybara and a group of otters all came out to play in the snow on Sunday

Autumn the baby antelope was bottle fed by keeper Jade Stott

Pictures: *Cotswold Wildlife Park*

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Pupil's design is to become MP's Christmas card

Victoria Prentis MP with card design winner Ethan Osborne

A CHRISTMAS card designed by a Bicester school pupil will be dropping onto doormats far and wide.

Ethan Osborne, of Bure Park Primary School, Bicester, won the annual Christmas card competition organised by north Oxfordshire MP Victoria Prentis.

Each year the MP challenges school children across her constituency to design a card for the 250 people on her Christmas card list.

She has run the contest since she was elected in 2015.

Earlier Mrs Prentis dropped into Bure Park School to deliver Ethan's prize which included some copies of the card and gifts from the House of Commons. Ethan and his family will also visit the Houses of Parliament early next year.

Mrs Prentis said: "I love running my Christmas card competition every year, and we always have some brilliant entries.

"Ethan's really stood out for his clever use of the silhouette design. It's a lovely piece of artwork and the cards look fantastic this year – I am sure everyone on my list will be very impressed."

Ethan said: "I really enjoyed meeting Victoria at school and am looking forward to visiting the Houses of Parliament.

"I liked designing my card and was very excited that I won. I would recommend everyone to take part next year."

Clubbers asked to give a quid and help children

LOVE Island winner Kem Cetinay is backing a Christmas children's charity drive by Oxford club ATIK which is asking clubbers to 'Give a Kid a Quid'.

Festive revellers at the Park End Street venue are invited to donate spare change to The Echo Trust to benefit local children's charities.

The charity was set up in 2002 by late-night bar and club operator The Deltic Group.

Since then it has raised more than £2.5million and supported causes ranging from children's hospitals to charity groups.

ATIK general manager Nick Greensted said: "Christmas is a time for giving and we're sure our customers will respond generously to our appeal.

"Give a Kid a Quid is a simple way to raise a lot of money that will transform the lives of local young people in our community."

The appeal runs until Saturday, January 6.

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News

Giant climb for charity

By Eva Astreinidou

A BRAVE cyclist took on a 'giant' of a mountain in France to help raise more than £3,000 for charity.

Peter Lockey decided to take on the challenge for Oxford-based homeless charity, the Gatehouse, which provides a café for the homeless and other vulnerable people in the city.

The intrepid cyclist took on 136km across three ascents of Mont Ventoux in France, raising £2,890 for the charity, with a colleague.

Peter, who works as leadership team ambassador at The Midcounties Co-operative in central Oxford, said: "The cycle challenge was one of the toughest I've taken on yet. I'd done a lot of training before but nothing quite prepares you for taking on 'the giant of Provence', as many call it, three times.

"The Gatehouse is the Midcounties' charity partner in the area, which we donate funds to through a number of initiatives. It really does go a long way in supporting the good work they do for the community."

Meanwhile, colleagues across Oxfordshire were busy helping to increase awareness of the charity through a four-day bucket collection, raising an additional £307.

Katrina Horne, project director at The Gatehouse, said: "The funds raised by Midcounties will be greatly appreciated by our guests who miss the comforts of home cooked food and a comfortable space to relax in.

"We've been lucky enough to work with The Midcounties Co-operative on several projects in the past, also receiving donations from its carrier bag fund and colleague bake sales, and look forward to continuing to work with them in future."

Peter Lockey cycled Mont Ventoux in France for Gatehouse

Supporting girls with autism

STAFF from schools across the county have taken part in a workshop aimed at supporting girls with autism.

Teachers and teaching assistants from 20 Oxfordshire schools learned more about how they can help girls who are on the autism spectrum.

It took place at LVS Oxford, a mixed school for young people aged 11-19 with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum, and was led by Deirdre Nic Sitric, a specialist trainer and founder of Autism Champions.

Ms Nic Sitric said: "Autism has historically been considered a predominantly 'male brain' condition so in the past it wasn't on the radar of parents, educators and health professionals when dealing with girls.

"Girls tend to be better than boys at masking their difficulties and are generally better at mirroring friends to cover up their social communication and relationship issues.

"However, they pay a price for keeping things together during the school day. Autistic girls are at much higher risk of mental health difficulties.

"This workshop looked at the challenges that autistic girls face and the differences between boys and girls' experience of autism."

Head of School Louisa Allison-Bergin said: "This workshop was so important as educators in mainstream schools clearly want to do the very best for all their students and need the knowledge to be able to identify girls who may be struggling in silence."

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LVS
Oxford
"The effect the school has had on my son has been incredible.
He is much happier, calmer and relaxed."

LVS Oxford Head of School Louisa Allison-Bergin (left) with guest speaker Deirdre Nic Sitric at the workshop

Cash boost to aid six projects

A STRING of organisations that help train and equip people for work have won grants to keep up the good work.

The move brings the total awarded this year by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) to more than £390,000.

Six projects have been given a cash injection – EMBS Community College, Film Oxford and Fusion Arts, Farm Inspiration Trust, Leys News, Oxfordshire Play Association and Incredible Edible Oxford.

The cash is part of the European Social Fund (ESF) Community Grants programme, which aims to support residents in Oxfordshire's most disadvantaged communities and help them access work or training.

Rachel Hammond, founder of Incredible Edible Oxford, said: "We are so excited to be creating accredited courses in edible horticulture and eco building - these skills are more in demand year on year and our courses will be targeted primarily at 16 to 18-year-olds wanting to work in a practical way outdoors."

Nigel Tipple, chief executive of OxLEP, said: "Oxfordshire continues to reaffirm a world-leading economy and it is programmes – like ESF Community Grants – that help to ensure those furthest away from the job market get opportunities to access employment and training that is both personally fulfilling and supports our local economy too."

For more go to oxford.gov.uk/esf

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News

Town's great and good remembered in names

By Eva Astreinidou

STREET names in a new housing development will remember those who made their mark on the town.

The West Witney scheme, the first phase of which is now under way, will feature around 1,000 homes.

It has now been revealed 10 of the street names around the development will be commemorating historic figures who had an influence on the town, following consultation with Witney town council and the help of historian Stanley Jenkins.

Cllr James Mills, leader at West Oxfordshire District Council, said: "Many of the names will be familiar to local people as they are of individuals in living memory who have made a major contribution to the town.

"This is a wonderful way of commemorating their efforts and will ensure they continue to be familiar to future generations."

Some of the names include Mary Box Crescent, named after Mary Box who co-founded Henry Box School with her husband Henry.

Another street is Mott Close, after Edward Mott, who was awarded the Victoria Cross after serving with the 1st Battalion of The Border Regiment in the First World War.

West Oxfordshire District Council leader James Mills with Witney mayor Chris Woodward

Rayson Lane will be named after Thomas Rayson, the architect responsible for both the central Witney and Newland war memorials.

There will also be a Centenary Way to mark the 100-year anniversary since the end of the First World War.

The 73-hectare West Witney development will include a new primary school, space for a secondary school, a neighbourhood centre with shops, a free car park, as well as a potential 80-unit care home.

A minimum of 30 per cent of the housing will be affordable.

There will be significant highway improvements as a result of the scheme while developer-funded contributions will go towards West Witney recreation ground (£250,000) and the Corn Exchange (£100,000), as well as town centre and car parking improvements (£250,000) and public art (£100,000).

Shelley Wright and Rebecca Rimmer are proud to be firefighters

You don't have to be the Hulk to join!

OXFORDSHIRE'S Fire and Rescue Service is encouraging women to help them put out fires in more ways than one.

The team has 32 operational firefighters who are female, making up just six per cent of the service.

Aside from dealing with crises such as flooding, road accidents, and chemical hazards, they help coordinate emergency planning and educate on safety and prevention for the local community.

They are also mums, shopkeepers, and marathon runners, of all ages and backgrounds.

Rebecca Rimmer, who has been with the fire service for 19 years, said: "You don't have to be the Incredible Hulk or Lara Croft, I am neither."

She joined the fire service when she was 21, and now has two children who are very proud to have a 'firefighter mummy'.

She added: "There is the perception that you have to be very young and fit. There is a required standard to ensure safety, however many female firefighters are mums, they come from all backgrounds and a range of ages."

Shelley Wright, who is 23 and has been with the fire service for 18 months, said: "When I joined Wantage fire station there hadn't been a woman there for five years. When the chief talked to me recently about being the only woman there I had forgotten about that – I am just part of the team".

To find out more, visit tinyurl.com/y7c6s7kn

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Following a survey carried out in 2015 by Anovum (a market research company) on 1325 hearing impaired people (605 hearing aid wearers and 720 not wearing hearing aids). The survey reports that hearing aids not only improve capabilities of hearing well but also improved the general health of hearing aid wearers compared to hearing impaired people who do not wear a hearing aid. Hearing aid users are less likely to think they have the symptoms of dementia, feel less physically and mentally exhausted, sleep better and are less likely to suffer from depression.

The survey confirms what some Audiologists have suspected for some time, that hearing aids are not only good for correcting hearing loss but in fact contribute to better and more active lives, better quality of life, and better overall health.

For the hearing impaired workers who wear a hearing aid it is reported that their hearing aids are useful for their job and that the hearing aids also increase the chance of them getting promoted, being in the right job and getting more salary compared to those hearing impaired people who have not obtained hearing aids.

The full report can be found at EuroTrak UK 2015 – ehima

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Officers honoured for helping islanders after hurricane hit

By Eva Astreinidou

POLICE officers who dropped everything to help those whose lives were devastated by Hurricane Irma have been honoured at a special ceremony.

Five officers from Thames Valley Police, along with five from Hampshire, were deployed to the British Virgin Islands for three weeks when disaster struck in September.

With no running water or mains electricity, no roof on their accommodation and criminals on the run after the prison was severely damaged, the team showed 'great determination and bravery'.

Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Francis Habgood said: "These officers provided security, support and compassion in really difficult circumstances.

"I know that the islanders were incredibly grateful for their presence and the officers were pleased to have been there to help them. I am very proud of them."

During their deployment the team of 10 helped to secure prisoners who were on the run, assisted the military with establishing water and electricity supplies and cleared dangerous debris from neighbourhoods.

The team worked at least 16 hours a day most days, all in 40 degree heat while wearing their uniforms designed for British weather.

Food was also in short supply and the team relied on basic rations to get them through.

The group even refused to leave when a second category five hurricane hit the island, insisting that they wanted to be there for those who needed them most.

Hampshire Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney said: "These officers have dealt with some of the most challenging situations that any officer can face and they have shown nothing but great professionalism and compassion.

"I am so proud of them all and residents living in Hampshire and the Thames Valley should take great comfort in knowing that such dedicated officers are working hard every day to make our communities safer."

The officers honoured from Thames Valley were Sgt David Keith, PC Simon Gray, PC David Kuttner, PC Jonathan Evans and PC Sean O'Neill.

Some of the officers who helped in the British Virgin Islands after the hurricane struck and below, the team with Chief Constables Francis Habgood, far left and Olivia Pinkney, far right

InBrief

Library activities

A LIBRARY will open its doors to the public during an action-packed week of events to celebrate the new facility.

Oxfordshire County Council's new facility at Westgate will host a variety of activities including live music and dance workshops, craft demonstrations and exhibitions from Monday.

The library, which replaces the old Central Library at Oxford's regenerated Westgate centre, will boast an impressive range of new features and services, including a 'makerspace' for community activities and special events, and a much larger children's library.

For more information, visit tinyurl.com/y7smzov5

Festive safety tips

PEOPLE can get tips on how to stay safe during the festive season at a safe zone event in High Street on Friday and Saturday nights.

Run jointly by Cherwell District Council and Thames Valley Police, revellers can pick up anti-spiking bottle stoppers and try out beer googles, which provide a sobering insight into how debilitating binge drinking is.

Cherwell District Council leader Barry Wood said they want people to stay safe while having fun and make sure they are aware of the dangers the party season can bring.

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Smoked duck breast salad served with mushroom dressing & madeira and balsamic vinegar reduction and pickled mushrooms, spinach and croutons (GF)
Festive beef burger topped with a pulled pork & cracked black pepper, streaky bacon and melted brie, with fries, cranberry & BBQ ketchup and sprout slaw (GF)

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'Misgendering' teacher to sue school over dismissal

By Eva Astrienidou

A CHRISTIAN teacher who faced disciplinary action after he referred to a transgender pupil as a girl is suing the school which claims he 'misgendered' the pupil.

Joshua Sutcliffe, from Oxford, was investigated by the school after he said 'well done girls' to a group that included a student who identifies as a boy.

Now, the Christian pastor is taking the school to an employment tribunal for constructive dismissal and discrimination.

The 27-year-old, who teaches children aged between 11 and 18, said the incident took place in early November and he apologised after the pupil became angry.

In a letter to the head teacher he said: "As a Christian, I do not share your belief in the ideology of transgenderism.

"I do not believe that young children should be encouraged to self-select a gender which may be different from their biological sex.

"Or that everyone at school should adjust their behaviour to accommodate such a 'transition'; or that people should be punished for lack of enthusiasm about it."

Mr Sutcliffe claims the school 'systematically and maliciously' breached his rights.

The maths teacher, who is also a pastor at the Christ Revelation Church in Oxford, said he tried to treat the pupil sensitively by avoiding the use of gender-specific pronouns and by referring to the pupil by name.

Documents seen at the time showed that he had also referred to him using the feminine pronouns 'she' and 'her' on other occasions.

Andrea Williams, chief executive of the Christian Legal Centre which is supporting the teacher, said: "We all know how much we change during our teenage years. It is vital that during those years we help our children to live in the biological sex they were born rather than encouraging them to change 'gender'.

"If we collude in the transgender delusion we do not serve our children well, we harm them".

The story was made public last month, provoking national outcry.

Following the media attention, the school postponed the pre-scheduled disciplinary hearing, and initiated further investigations against Mr Sutcliffe, alleging breach of confidence and bringing the school into disrepute.

On Monday, the secondary school said it would be "inappropriate" to comment.

Sheep rescued from marsh

A STRANDED sheep had a lucky escape after being helped out of a muddy marsh by the RSPCA.

A member of the public spotted the stricken sheep trapped in mud at Otmoor RSPB reserve in east Oxfordshire and contacted the animal welfare charity.

Animal collection officer Grace Mead said: "The poor ewe was stuck in the mud up to her chin. She was rocking from side to side but wasn't able to move.

"Thanks to a helping hand from the fire service and a local farmer we managed to free her and she ran off.

"Luckily she wasn't injured, just trapped and very frightened. She clearly couldn't climb to safety herself so needed a little help to get out of the muddy mess."

If you see an animal you have concerns about call the RSPCA's emergency line on 0300 1234 999.

Live living room scene with a message

'NO one should have no one' is the message behind an event aiming to help combat the epidemic of loneliness in older people.

Age UK is hosting a live living room scene in Bonn Square on Saturday as part of its annual winter campaign.

The scene, featuring local older actors, will represent an older person being completely alone on Christmas Day, which according to the charity is the reality for thousands of people aged 65 and over across Oxfordshire.

The charity hopes to raise awareness and funds for those who are facing social isolation and need support.

The charity provides a Phone Friends service that helps more than 280 people in Oxfordshire, who receive at least one call a week from a volunteer – but a spokesperson says more needs to be done, with more than 11,000 people who regularly feel lonely in Oxfordshire.

Visit tinyurl.com/ybgroc67

Tributes paid to PC killed in road crash

TRIBUTES have been paid after an on-duty police officer and a 91-year-old woman died in a road collision last week.

PC James Dixon, aged 39, and 91-year-old Gladys Goodwin died as a result of a road collision in Wargrave on the afternoon of December 5.

The collision involved a car and motorcycle which was being ridden by the on-duty officer.

Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Francis Habgood said: "My officers, staff and I were devastated to hear the very sad news about our colleague.

"James was a hugely respected officer, serving with the force for 18 years in a variety of roles.

"In policing we often talk about the strength and importance of the police family and that is never more so as we share in the pain of loss and offer support to one another at this time of need."

"Our thoughts remain with PC Dixon's family and friends, as well as those of Mrs Goodwin's, at this very difficult time."

Mrs Goodwin's daughter Sandra Blunden described her mum as a 'fun loving jolly lady that everybody loved as soon as they met her'.

She added: "I will be completely lost without her. She was full of fun and laughter and never had a bad word to say.

"I will remember her as the perfect mum that everybody would want."

The incident has been referred to the IPCC who have begun an investigation.

PC James Dixon died last week

Gladys Goodwin was also killed in the collision in Wargrave

MP calls for debate over river weed

HENLEY MP John Howell has called for an urgent debate in Parliament over a "highly invasive" weed which is significantly impacting parts of the River Thames.

Called Floating Pennywort, the weed is not native to the UK and is threatening aquatic wildlife in and around Henley and other stretches of the River Thames.

The weed, which can grow at a rate of up to 20cm a day according to the Environment Agency, suffocates native plants and fish and was banned from sale in 2014.

Mr Howell said via his "post bag" he had received concerns from many residents.

Talking in Parliament last week, Mr Howell said: "It is a strong contender for the worst aquatic weed in the UK and it is affecting large stretches of the Thames, including around Henley.

"A debate would allow us to sort out how to deal with it."

Leader of the House, MP Andrea Leadsom told colleagues the Environment Agency had already removed "thousands of tonnes" of the plant and was also "spraying" to control its growth.

She said a monitoring and removal programme would be in place from next spring.

The Environment Agency said: "We are aiming to begin similar works around Henley before the end of the year, with the support of specialist contractors.

"We will also undertake further works on some of the river stretches already tackled in order to reduce further the risk of regrowth.

"Effective long-term management is extremely challenging, potentially very costly, but very important if the plant's spread is to be controlled."

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News

Join Christingle services to help children in need

CHURCHES across Oxfordshire are inviting the community to help bring the 'promise of Christmas' to vulnerable children.

A number of Christingle services will be held across the county this month in aid of the Children's Society.

All money raised from the traditional annual event will fund the charity's projects that support those who go missing from home or are experiencing hardship, abuse and neglect.

On Christmas Eve, St Michael's Church in Cumnor, St Mary's parish church in Chipping Norton, and St Helen's Church in Abingdon will host their services.

The festivities revolve around the lighting of Christingles – oranges decorated with a candle and red ribbon, dried fruits and sweets on cocktail sticks.

Christingle has been taking place for almost half a century with around one million people attending each year and more than £1million raised at events annually.

To find out more visit www.christingle.org.

>> Got a story? Call the newsdesk on 01235 516919 or 01235 516932

Hundreds spread seasonal joy at switch on

THAME was filled with snowflakes and sparkles as Santa and Frozen's Snow Sisters switched on the town's Christmas lights.

The festive season was officially marked with a switch-on earlier this month, with families and visitors enjoying a range of festive stalls, tasty food and a variety of attractions and entertainment on offer.

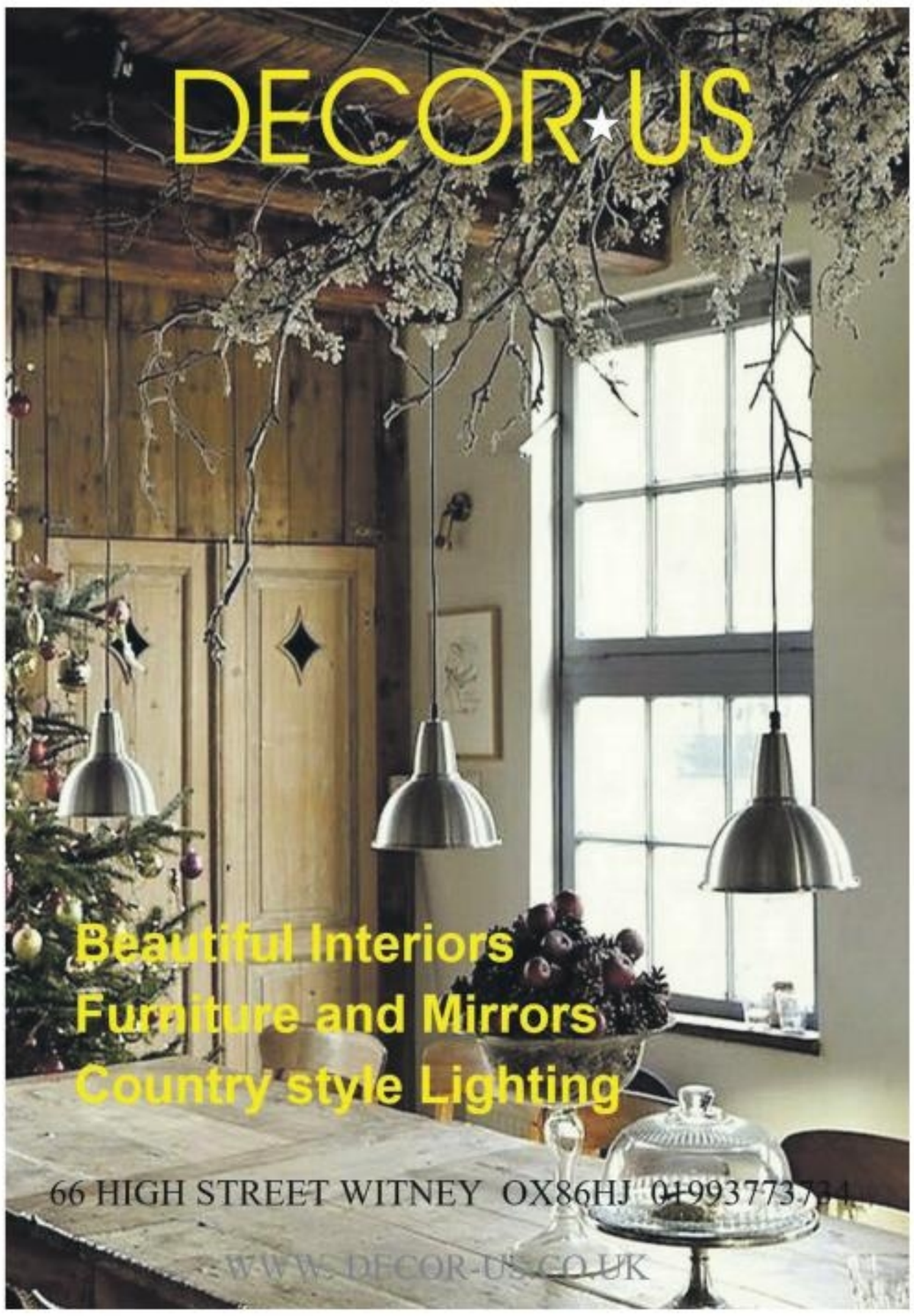
Father Christmas made the special journey to visit his grotto in the town and to wish the people of Thame a merry Christmas.

Visitors also had the opportunity to take a spin in the go-karts, play in the snow in a human-sized snow globe and take photos with the Snow Sisters.

There was also entertainment from a variety of local performance groups.

Many shops also stayed open late and offered a range of festive exclusives including free mince pies, special offers and face-painting for the children.

Just before the lights were switched-on, visitors were treated to a lantern parade through the town led by Father Christmas, the Mayor of Thame Cllr Tom Wyse and this year's Snowflake Search winner – two-and-a-half year old Ellen Sweet.



Ho ho ho-w did Santas do running in the cold?

By George Welch

MORE than 100 jolly Santas braved freezing temperatures and gave up their lunch to take part in a business park's fun run.

Milton Park was a sight to behold when workers ran, walked and jogged the 5k race on Friday to raise money for our charity of the year, fundraising group Play2Give and MS Therapy Oxfordshire.

The event was a resounding success, with 150 people taking part raising more than £600 for both groups.

P2G founder Andy Baker, of Great Western Drive, Didcot, described the event as "fantastic" and "inspiring".

He said: "It was truly inspiring to see so many workers on the park and members of the gym turn out to support both causes braving the incredibly cold weather to dash around the business park.

"To see 150 signed up to take on the challenge of 5km on a bitter cold December day was heart-warming, and it was, with the help of Santa, a real privilege to officially start them on their way."

The fastest man came in at 18 minutes while the first woman across the finish line was Didcot's very own charity running champion Eileen Naughton, who dressed as Lady Claus. Eileen has raised more than £20,000 by running many marathons over the years.

Milton Park run was nothing compared to North Pole temperatures for these runners. Picture: *Aurélien Langlais*

The run was organised by The Park Club gym and the business park to bring early festive spirit and cheer. It is hoped it will become an annual event in the calendar.

A Christmas fair was also held to boost the funds of P2G, which raises cash for Headway Oxfordshire and the Oxford Children's Hospital.

MS Therapy Oxfordshire provides affordable and accessible complementary therapies, often not available on the NHS, as well as information and support, to those with MS.

To donate to P2G's 10th anniversary appeal, which is nearing £20,000, visit tinyurl.com/zksd8xx.

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News

Becca Roberts, Annie Pickering and Alice Jones in their garden in Cowley Road dressed as Santa undeterred by the weather

John Greenwood's dog Hovis was ready to go as were event organisers Hannah Barrett and Hannah Smart, below

Bet they wish they'd checked their phones – the three who didn't get the message about the run being cancelled

Hardy soul Jo Aldhouse says: 'I gave it a go anyway, in my nearest park'

Santas sleighed by snow

Helen & Douglas House forced to cancel 11th annual Santas on the Run due to bad weather

By Owen Hughes

HELEN & Douglas House has apologised to the thousands of Santas stuck in the snow after the Oxford based charity was forced to cancel its biggest annual fundraiser due to treacherous weather conditions.

Heavy snowfall over the weekend led to the charity calling off its 11th Santas on the Run event, putting vital funds for the children's hospice at risk.

It is the first time the charity has had to cancel the fundraiser, but said it still needs people to make donations, send in sponsorship money and organise festive fundraising events to help support local terminally ill children and young adults.

Hannah Barrett, events manager for Helen & Douglas House, said: "We are very sad about having to cancel this great event which we know everyone was really looking forward to and raises vital funds for the charity.

"We texted and emailed all the participants, suppliers and staff early on Sunday morning to let them know not to come to the event.

"Only three out of 1,809 participants did not get the message and made their way to the event."

She added that people are still planning to send in their sponsorship, but "inevitably we will raise less money than we normally would do".

"Even though the event was cancelled we have still incurred significant costs," she said.

"We are therefore hugely thankful to all the participants who have said they will not be requesting a refund."

Many of the Santas have chosen to run or walk the distance another day to help generate the much-needed funds for the hospice.

Rachel Monks in her Santa outfit

Lynn Lewis, mum of James who died at Douglas House in 2014, was planning on giving a speech at the event and said: "I appeal to participants to still send in their sponsorship, donate money and fundraise for them because the hospice really needs the money to help support families like ours."

Around 2,200 Santas took part in last year's 3.5 km fun run, which starts in Broad Street and goes through University Parks.

To donate or raise money for Helen & Douglas House this Christmas, go to www.hdh.org.uk, email fundraising@helenanddouglas.org.uk, or call 01865 799150.

Helen & Douglas House snowman made by Alison Stone on the Oxford Ring Road to show support for the hospice and below, one made by Kayleigh and Brodie in Middle Barton

Sarah Brombley and Amana built a snowman instead

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Review: Samantha McGregor

Fun, laughter and slapstick!

WHAT a great start to the festive season thanks to the Oxford Playhouse pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk.

We just love pantomimes, all the slap-stick and silliness makes you feel good and we always float out of the theatre.

And this year, Jack and the Beanstalk, did not let us down.

For the third year running Steve Marmion has been at the helm.

He cleverly uses well-known pop tunes and a bit of Grime to help tell the story of naive Jack, his sister Simone, their mother Dame Trott, cow Jagger and a handful of magic beans.

We join the tale as an evil giant has stolen all the children of Oxford and kept them prisoner in his kingdom above the clouds.

With the help of his baddie wife Dame Judy Hench, played brilliantly by Amrou Al-Kadhi who has a first from Cambridge in "insults", they collect taxes by controlling the weather.

But when Jack throws the magic beans they start to grow and grow and grow into a giant beanstalk, which leads Jack on the adventure of a lifetime.

The show is full of gags – Brexit and tax havens get a mention, as well as top tunes and all the panto-mime fun you expect, including the chance to join in with the song Chop 500 Sticks, a take on The Proclaimers song I'm Gonna Be which includes the well-known lyric I would walk 500 miles.

It also includes some twists you don't expect, including the identity of the giant.

Watch out for Jennifer Wakefield, who plays Jill, as she makes her professional debut after leaving her Oxfordshire teaching career for one on the stage.

If you get the chance, go and enjoy the show.

The Oxford Playhouse has just announced Steve Marmion will write and direct next year's pantomime Dick Whittington and His Cat.

Tickets for Jack and the Beanstalk at Oxford Playhouse start at £15 and are available from the Ticket Office on 01865 305305 or view oxfordplayhouse.com

On stage

Go Offbeat with fringe theatre

Applications have opened for the Oxford Playhouse and Arts at the Old Fire Station Offbeat Festival 2018.

Now in its third year, this festival showcases the best in fringe theatre from across the UK in nine action-packed days.

Running from June 22 to 30, Off-beat 2018 will feature more than 50 performances across six stages, and for the first time will incorporate Oxford Playhouse's 640 seat audito-rium.

The festival aims for at least a quarter of the programme to be from local artists and companies, and all the performances are of works never before seen in Oxford.

The vast majority of the tickets will be priced at £10 or less in order to allow as many people as possible to see the shows.

Jeremy Spafford, director at the Old Fire Station, said: "We love Offbeat.

"It is a moment when two great organisations come together to bring some of the best small scale contem-porary work to Oxford audiences.

"We're hoping even more artists apply this year because we want this festival to grow and grow."

To apply to take part view off-beatoxford.co.uk/apply and submit applications before January 30.

Join Common People in South Parks

Oxford's Common People is back for 2018 on May 26 and 27 at South Parks.

It is brought to the city by the multi-award-winning team who bring you Bestival and Camp Bestival.

Bands have yet to be announced for the festival, which will celebrate music, arts and community.

Common People curator Rob da Bank says: "All of us at festival head-quarters love kicking our year off with Common People – it's such an easy formula, turn up for lunchtime, have a great day and evening listening to great bands and DJs and eating some of the best festi food around

and then be in your own bed before midnight. Simple. We can't wait to drop into Oxford again."

Go to commonpeopleoxford.ticket-line.co.uk/ for more information.

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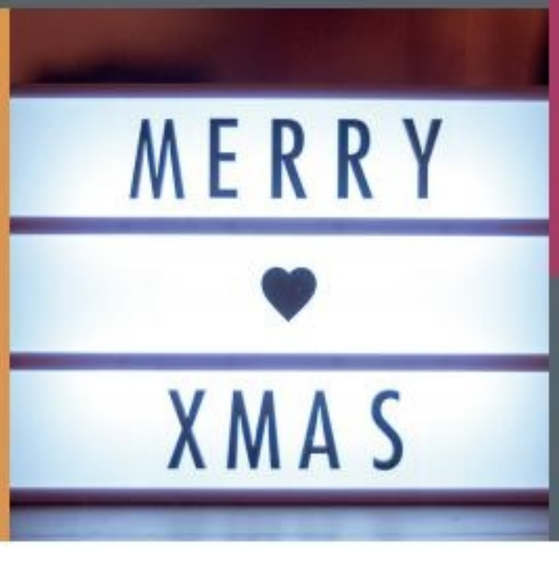

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Explore passion for adventure on film

By Samantha McGregor

THE Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour will stop off at Oxford's New Theatre next year.

The festival features a collection of new adventure films, starring the world's top explorers on mind-blowing journeys in wild and remote parts of the globe.

For the first time the festival, which depicts extreme adventurers from across the globe, will be staged in more than 100 venues.

It stops off at the New Theatre on Wednesday, February 7.

Tour Director Nell Teasdale, said: "This is the first time we've topped 100 shows in the UK and Ireland, which is really exciting.

"UK and Irish audiences have a huge passion for adventure, so we're delighted to be able to share these amazing films and their intrepid characters with wider audiences and even more venues.

"We guarantee the tour will inspire viewers to start planning their own outdoor adventures too."

The tour's films are chosen from hundreds of films entered into the prestigious Banff Mountain Film Festival, which takes place every year in the Canadian Rockies.

Highlights include The Frozen Road, a film about Yorkshireman Ben Page who embarked on a solo bike-packing journey in the Canadian Arctic. It starts with his romantic vision of perfect solitude, but as the latitude increases and the mercury falls below -30C, he discovers what it truly means to travel alone in this great emptiness.

There's also Into The Galaxies – A Greenland Epic, which features adventurers Ben Stookesberry, Sarah McNair-Landry and Erik Boomer, who take on an extreme mission in Greenland.

The trio use kite skis and tow their white-water kayaks 1,000km over the Greenland Ice Cap to reach the northernmost river ever paddled – and then the challenge gets even tougher.

Or see Dreamwalkers – The Faroes Project, set in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean, the Faroe Islands are renowned for wild weather and swirling winds – certainly not ideal when you're perched on a wire between towering sea cliffs.

Follow four Dutch friends as they attempt to be the first people to highline in these desolate islands.

The tour is part of the wider Banff World Tour, which travels the globe each year, visiting nearly 50 countries and reaching more than 400,000 people worldwide.

For tickets call 0844 871 3020 or go to atgtickets.com/oxford

The beauty and magic of Iceland

BANBURY Museum is hosting world-class photographer Tim Rudman's haunting visions of Iceland.

Called Iceland, An Uneasy Calm, Tim's images will be on display at the Castle Quay museum until January 20.

Tim is acknowledged as one of Britain's finest landscape photographers and is respected internationally as a photographer, printer, author and authority on darkroom printing and toning techniques.

Iceland is a land of myth, magic and spectacular scenery, where geysers spurt, mud pools boil and steam billows from the ground.

Iceland, An Uneasy Calm is a journey into Rudman's eight-year long relationship with the country, its spaces, people and drama.

Tim said: "Iceland will be different for every photographer. Sometimes it will be immediate and accessible, sometimes elusive and tantalizingly out of reach like a word on the tip of the tongue.

"It may be something that only slowly reveals itself in glimpses over time, revealed perhaps by a change in the light, a local conversation or a new fragment of history.

"It is never the same - there is always 'more'."

Tim's work has earned many awards and has been featured in publications around the world.

Tickets £4 for adults, £3 concessions, £2 children, under 5s free.

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Out & About

Speaking – but what are heads saying?

By Samantha McGregor

THIS winter a gallery at Modern Art Oxford will be transformed into a theatrical set inhabited by a cast of large female heads.

The installation, Speakers, is a new commission by Swiss artist Nicolas Party, who lives and works in Brussels and New York.

Nicholas pays homage to the pioneering women in the city and its universities across the centuries, balancing what he considers "the heavily masculine energy of Oxford's architecture and academic histories".

A key reference point is the set of carved stone busts that crown the railings of Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre – first sculpted for the site in 1662-83 – known colloquially as the heads of the emperors.

Party's heads are unique, individually painted sculptures, dominating the physical space of the gallery at a height of two metres tall.

The five sculptures produce an atmosphere of immersion and drama as Party has designed the heads to incorporate audio soundtracks which offer improvised theatrical encounters for gallery visitors.

There is also a curated series of public events taking place in the Piper Gallery, from music recitals to artist residencies, which recognise the wide-ranging history of women's contributions to cultural life and international academic and research communities.

Party is both a classically trained painter and former graffiti artist. He has developed a signature aesthetic of saturated colour and flat, graphic style which is instantly recognisable.

His recent exhibitions include Hammer Projects: Nicolas Party at the Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, Pathway for the Dallas Museum of Art and sunrise, sunset at the Hirshhorn Museum.

This year his work has appeared at Sculpture Garden, Washington and Dinner for 24 Sheep, Gallery Met, The Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Catch Nicolas Party's Speakers until February 18.

■ There's still time to see Hannah Ryggen's exhibition at Modern Art Oxford. Hannah, one of Scandinavia's most outstanding artistic figures, is renowned for her monumental tapestries exploring the political concerns of her time, from the rise of fascism and far right ideologies to the threat of nuclear power.

From St Tropez to Oxfordshire

COMEDIAN and writer Shazia Mirza is bringing her new live show, With Love From St Tropez, to Oxfordshire.

Following her critically acclaimed 2016 sell-out international run of The Kardashians Made Me Do It and Channel 4's Celebrity Island with Bear Grylls, Shazia will take to the stage at Banbury's Mill Arts Centre on Saturday, March 24, and The Old Fire Station, in Oxford, on April 6.

With Love From St Tropez is a show about lies and truth, nudity and the periodic table, and whether these things hold the key to the future.

In her show The Kardashians Made Me Do It, Shazia explored politically correct liberalism, the intrusion of ISIS into young British lives and Jihadi brides and enjoyed four sell-out runs in London as well as in the US, Sweden and Paris.

Shazia has recently appeared in a host of shows including BBC 2's Top Gear, ITV's Jonathan Ross and Loose Women, and is a regular panellist on Channel 5's The Wright Stuff.

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We have teamed up with Cirque du Soleil to offer our readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to see this highly sought after production at the Royal Albert Hall on Tuesday 27th February 2018 at 7.30pm.

There are 3x pairs of tickets to be won. To be in with a chance of winning answer the following question:

Q: Which animal kingdom does OVO explore? Reptiles, Mammals, Insects or Fish?

Prize tickets are Price Level 2-3 and are valid for Tuesday 27th February 2018 7.30pm performance only, strictly subject to availability. All prize tickets will be supplied as e-tickets and are non-transferable. No cash alternative is available. Travel is not included.

To enter this competition and more like it, go online to
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Woolgate Shopping Centre @WoolgateSC www.woolgateshoppingcentre.co.uk

puzzle drome

Your weekly puzzle challenge

CROSS CODE

26	18	11	13	26	24	11	■	12	11	13	4	13
1	■	18	■	18	■	13	9	18	■	21	■	20
20	6	18	13	6	9	26	■	23	10	6	26	11
11	■	19	■	2	■	23	■	9	■	11	■	5
13	26	18	23	20	■	26	23	5	15	24	11	12
■	7	■	■	11	14	11	18	■	■	10	■	11
24	19	10	23	26	11	■	23	18	10	8	11	18
19	■	23	■	■	26	6	3	11	■	■	7	■
10	6	13	8	9	19	5	■	16	23	12	11	18
4	■	8	■	5	■	23	■	24	■	19	■	11
17	6	9	10	11	■	3	18	11	11	22	11	13
23	■	11	■	20	23	24	■	10	■	11	■	11
7	19	18	13	26	■	11	25	26	9	5	10	26

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6 U	7	8	9	10 C	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 R	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

MAGIC SQUARE

FLATTENED INFILLS

Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.

Quiz Challenge

1. In the nursery rhyme Who Killed Cock Robin, what bird volunteered to be the parson?
2. What wardrobe item is the luxury retailer Thomas Pink best associated with?
3. For what does the common text message sign-off abbreviation PCM stand?
4. Which football club in Scotland was founded in 1874 by the rector and pupils of a school?
5. Olympic gold-medallist rower James Cracknell is married to which TV and radio presenter?
6. Kampala is the capital of which African country?
7. Which TV series, with Peter Davison in the title role, was adapted from mystery novels by Margery Allingham?
8. Which small town with a famous history completes the name of the Parliamentary constituency: Bexhill and...where?
9. Which Warwickshire batsman played his 100th Test match for England at Headingley, in June 2014?
10. What organic compound used to preserve biological specimens has the chemical formula CH_2O?

NONAGRAM

C	U	S
S	K	I
L	E	N

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:
19 Good; 22 Very Good; 26 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

WORD PYRAMID

Spell out a 15-letter word or phrase by moving from one chamber to another within the pyramid. You may only enter each of the chambers once and may only proceed through openings in the walls. The first letter may appear in any chamber.

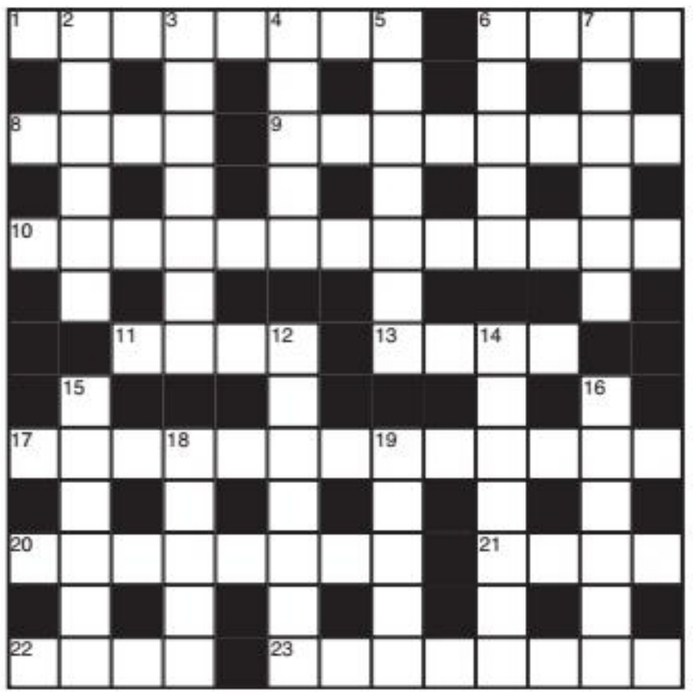
D
M R
N Y A
I N B Y
T O A C K

FIVE ALIVE

ZP	AO	ON	EM	SL
HE	■	ED	■	IE
OB	RP	OE	WR	AN
RT	■	DU	■	DG
OA	AG	SR	EI	SE

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Sweets returned under pressure (8)
6. Thunderous applause? (4)
8. Fortified site used by holidaymakers (4)
9. In the convent it is of first importance (8)
10. New means of access used for breaking a deadlock (5,8)
11. Thought it was in the Merseyside area (4)
13. Lorry driver, one lost in twisting drive (4)
17. Extremely fast, like a live news broadcast (5,2,1,5)
20. Short protest about sailor turning politician (8)
21. Top monkey gets a kiss (4)
22. Old president needed transport to hospital (4)
23. Deserving time, ring off (8)

DOWN

2. In turn each has the drinks container (3,3)
3. Former partner modelled naked (7)
4. Pie's a funny brown colour (5)
5. Tore after daughter and spilt a little water (7)
6. Despicable person has one ring, a fascinating item (5)
7. Fasten most of the case (6)
12. There is one of three in this type of puzzle (7)
14. Trusting about Latin translation (7)
15. Polish up the Perrier, perhaps, at the office (6)
16. Back at sea (6)
18. The clergy form a great number in church (5)
19. Rita's indisposed but is out of bed (5)

SUDOKU

Easy Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box. **Hard**

		8			4			
			8			3	4	
				6			9	5
1			2	9	5		8	7
5	6				7	1		9
			3			4	5	
		7	9		8		1	
	3	5			1			
4				7	3	2		

			6	8		5		4
	8		4	9		7	1	
		2						
						8		
1		4						
7	6			1		4		
2		3						
	5				7	1	3	
6			1					5

EQUALISER

6 6
6 ○ 3 ○ 2
3 3
6 ○ 3 ○ 14
2 5

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same.

Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

All puzzles on this page are supplied by Sirius Media Services. To try more of our puzzles interactively online go to **www.puzzledrome.com**

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QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Protected against disease (6)
4. Stabbed (6)
8. Addictive drug (6)
10. Moved to music (6)
11. Flowering plant (5)
12. Looked lecherously (6)
14. Roll of parchment (6)
16. Impolite (4)
17. Successor (4)
19. Grains of rock (4)
22. Deprivation (4)
26. Atomic cores (6)
27. Polar covering (6)
28. Operate a loom (5)
29. Thrust roughly (6)
30. Euphoric (6)
31. Delicately pretty (6)
32. Engraver (6)

DOWN

1. Breathe in (6)
2. Amalgamation (6)
3. Pinned down (6)
5. Subtle difference (6)
6. Agent (6)
7. Swindle (6)
9. Bare (4)
10. Bowl (4)
13. Bucolic (5)
15. Wash lightly (5)
18. Innate (6)
19. Edible crustaceans (6)
20. Most modern (6)
21. Expired (4)
22. On air (4)
23. American cat (6)
24. Whisky (6)
25. Arachnid (6)

SOLUTIONS

QUIZ CHALLENGE: 1 Rook; 2 Shirts; 3 Please Call Me; 4 Hamilton Academical; 5 Beverley Turner; 6 Uganda; 7 Campion; 8 Battle (site of Battle of Hastings); 9 Ian Bell; 10 Formaldehyde (also methanal).

CROSS CODE

1 Y	2 M	3 B	4 K	5 N	6 U	7 W	8 H	9 I	10 C	11 E	12 D	13 S
14 V	15 G	16 F	17 J	18 R	19 O	20 P	21 Q	22 Z	23 A	24 L	25 X	26 T

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD:

Across – 1 Stressed; 6 Clap; 8 Camp; 9 Priority; 10 Fresh approach; 11 Idea; 13 Den; 17 Quick as a flash; 20 Democrat; 21 Apex; 22 Bush; 23 Melting.

Down – 2 Tea urn; 3 Exposed; 4 Sepia; 5 Dripped; 6 Civic; 7 Attach; 12 Anagram; 14 Reliant; 15 Bureau; 16 Astern; 18 Cloth; 19 Astir.

QUICK CROSSWORD:

Across – 1 Immune; 4 Knifed; 8 Heroin; 10 Danced; 11 Lupin; 12 Lecherously; 14 Scroll; 16 Rude; 17 Heir; 19 Sand; 22 Loss; 26 Nuclei; 27 Icecap; 28 Weave; 29 Rammed; 30 Elated; 31 Dainty; 32 Etcher.

Down – 1 Inhale; 2 Merger; 3 Naked; 5 Nuance; 6 Factor; 7 Diddle; 9 Nude; 10 Dish; 13 Rural; 15 Rinse; 18 Inbred; 19 Scampi; 20 Newest; 21 Died; 22 Live; 23 Ocelot; 24 Scotch; 25 Spider.

MAGIC SQUARE: lift; isle; flan; tend.

WORD PYRAMID: Not in my backyard.

EQUALISER: Clockwise from top left – divide; add; subtract; multiply. Total: 4.

HARD SUDOKU

3	7	1	6	8	2	5	9	4
5	8	6	4	9	3	7	1	2
4	9	2	5	7	1	3	6	8
9	2	5	3	6	4	8	7	1
1	3	4	7	2	8	6	5	9
7	6	8	9	1	5	4	2	3
2	1	3	8	5	6	9	4	7
8	5	9	2	4	7	1	3	6
6	4	7	1	3	9	2	8	5

EASY SUDOKU

9	5	8	1	3	4	7	2	6
2	7	6	8	5	9	3	4	1
3	1	4	7	6	2	8	9	5
1	4	3	2	9	5	6	8	7
5	6	2	4	8	7	1	3	9
7	8	9	3	1	6	4	5	2
6	2	7	9	4	8	5	1	3
8	3	5	6	2	1	9	7	4
4	9	1	5	7	3	2	6	8

FIVE ALIVE:

(1) Across – Zooms; Brown; Agree. **Down** – Zebra; Odour; Singe.

(2) Across – Panel; Opera; Oasis. **Down** – Photo; Needs; Leads.

NONAGRAM:

click; clunk; cusk; kiln; kinless; kiss; lick; like; liken; link; luck; LUCKINESS; lunk; neck; nick; nickel; nuke; sick; sicken; sickle; silk; silken; sink; skein; skin; slick; slink; slunk; snack; snick; snuck; suck; suckle; sulk; sunk; sunlike; unlike.

"I honestly believe that Colourfence is the best general purpose fencing product on the market today!"

Get ready for Autumn

Now's the perfect time to replace your garden fence once and for all. Anna Ryder Richardson - Designer and Television Presenter - takes a closer look at Colourfence, the revolutionary low-maintenance system.

It's been ten years since I regularly graced TV screens helping transform people's living spaces with MDF and stripped floorboards. Recently it's been more "celebrity muck out" than "celebrity make-over" as I took up the challenge of owning my own Wildlife Zoo in Tenby. In this time I've learnt quiet a lot about fences and having researched the various options for my own benefit I thought I would share my knowledge with a wider audience.

The latest design processes mean there is now a tremendous array of fencing products for you to choose from, constructed from a variety of materials. Each has its own attributes, and ultimately it can often come down to a matter of personal preference. For me, there was one unique system that stood out as providing the best balance between price and functionality which eradicates fencing problems for good. Or for at least 25 years. Colourfence. For quality, value, longevity, aesthetic design, this fencing system ticks all the boxes. Fencing made for the 21st century that will transform the look of your garden which is supplied and fitted by a company whose customer service is as good as the product.

In my view, Colourfence is the 'Rolls Royce' of fencing – just without the exclusive price tag. What's more, it's guaranteed to stay in place in up to 130mph winds and is virtually maintenance free.

To find out how the experts from Colourfence might help you, I suggest you call **01865 582 171** and speak to their team.

Colourfence: The ultimate garden fence?

For many Colourfence is perhaps the ultimate choice. For the last 15 years it's been widely used across the UK and has steadily gained a reputation for its quality. By using the highest specification Colorbond steel in the fence structure itself, complemented by the highest level of customer service from accredited Franchisees, Colourfence is now regarded by many as the premier fencing solution in the market. Immune to the rot and resistant to the weather that so quickly effects wooden fences, Colourfence has none of the drawbacks of wood - plenty of additional benefits and what's more it's better value!

Call **01865 582 171** for more information

Gardeners' Questions

Q Wooden fence panels just don't seem to last - is there a storm resistant alternative?

A The Colourfence system has been tested under cyclonic conditions to withstand storms with wind gusts up to 130mph. Unlike your wooden fence - once professionally installed - Colourfence really will stay up!

Q No matter what I treat my wooden fence with - nothing seems to prevent it rotting or looking shabby for very long.

A Treating your fence is a thankless and expensive task. It's also a losing battle. Wood simply want's to rot. Colourfence offers a low-maintenance alternative where by an occasional wash down will keep it looking great for up to 25 years! GUARANTEED!†

THIS WEEK'S JOB

†Terms and conditions apply - full details available on request

Head into Autumn - with COLOURFENCE

The only garden fence you will ever need!

Every gardener knows that it pays to plan ahead. If you are one of the thousands of people who watched helpless, as winter winds battered their garden, it will not be a surprise that garden fences are almost always the first casualty. Whether you have previously patched, painted or simply prayed to keep your fence going, there's no escaping the fact that timber fences will always fall victim to the weather. With Colourfence you can put your garden straight once and for all. Colourfence is scientfically tested and cyclonically rated to ensure when professionally installed, it can withstand wind gusts of up to 130mph. Once it's up – it stays up and is guaranteed to look good year after year. Safe, extra secure and hassle free – you will NEVER need to paint it, treat it or patch it. An occasional hose down will be all you need do to keep it in top condition for years to come. In fact the system is so durable that Colourfence will guarantee† their fencing to last at least 25 years. Available in a range of colours to suit any garden, with or without decorative trellis, the highly skilled installation team make short work of their dramatic transformations. Your sad old fence will be e_ ciently cleared and replaced, leaving you to get back to enjoying your rejuvenated garden. Pricing is just as straightforward and equally attractive. Starting costs are in line with inferior timber systems but with no annual treatments required, Colourfence saves you time and money each and every year. Their aim is your peace of mind. With a 25 year guarantee† Colourfence speaks for itself and promises a lifetime of hassle-free enjoyment.

For more information and to arrange a FREE no obligation site visit simply call one of their helpful team on 01865 582 171.

COLOURFENCE

the revolutionary low-maintenance system

01865 582 171

colourfence.co.uk

†Terms and conditions apply - full details available on request

In detail:

- Virtually Maintenance-free.
- Save time & money - no treating required.
- Guaranteed† not to rot, warp or peel for up to 25 years.
- Costs in line with far inferior timber systems
  Variety of colours and sizes available
- Professionally installed by accredited Franchisees

Colourfence is built to last!

NO PRESSURE PROMISE

To reassure customers that our free no obligation site survey and quotation is not a precursor to high pressure sales techniques, all Colourfence Franchisees have signed up to the Colourfence No Pressure Promise. Call or visit our website for details.

COLOUR FENCE

Saturday December 16th

BBC 1

TOP TV

1.15pm Sports Personality of the Year 2017 - The Contenders

MORNING

10.00am Saturday Kitchen Live
11.30am Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Football Focus
1.00pm BBC News
1.15pm Sports Personality of the Year 2017 - The Contenders
2.15pm Bargain Hunt
3.15pm Escape to the Country
4.00pm Final Score
5.25pm BBC News
5.35pm Regional News and Weather
5.40pm Pointless

EVENING

6.30pm Strictly Come Dancing
9.00pm Michael Mcintyre's Big Show
10.00pm BBC News
10.20pm Match of the Day
11.45pm The NFL Show
12.15am Surviving Christmas
1.40am Weather for the Week Ahead
1.45am BBC News
6.00am Breakfast

BBC 2

TOP TV

5.05pm Roger Moore: My Word is My Bond

MORNING

7.30am Naomi's Nightmares of Nature
8.00am Deadly 60
8.30am Show Me What You're Made of: UK
9.00am Saturday Mash-Up!
11.00am Penguins on a Plane: Great Animal Moves

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well
12.30pm Tom Kerridge's Best Ever Dishes
1.00pm Homes Under the Hammer
1.45pm Coast
2.20pm Garden Rescue
2.50pm Mastermind
3.20pm Possessed
5.05pm Roger Moore: My Word is My Bond

EVENING

6.05pm Escape to Athena
8.00pm Attenborough's Life That Glows
9.00pm Feud: Bette and Joan
9.55pm Feud: Bette and Joan
10.45pm QI XL
11.30pm Jeff Lynne's Elo - Wembley or Bust
12.45am Shadow of the Vampire
2.10am This is BBC Two
6.05am Coast

ITV

TOP TV

2.55pm The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas

MORNING

9.00am Wishfart
9.25am ITV News
9.30am Saturday Morning with James Martin
11.20am Gino's Italian Coastal Escape
11.50am Countrywise

AFTERNOON

12.20pm Thunderbirds are Go
12.45pm ITV News
12.55pm Endeavour
2.55pm The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas
4.35pm The Chase
5.35pm Paul O'Grady: For The Love of Dogs

EVENING

6.05pm ITV News London
6.15pm ITV News
6.30pm The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
9.45pm ITV News
10.00pm The Hangover
11.55pm Tonight at the London Palladium
12.45am Jackpot247
3.00am The Hungry Sailors
3.50am ITV Nightscreen
6.00am Sooty
6.10am Bottom Knocker Street
6.20am Bottom Knocker Street
6.35am Dino Dana

Channel 4

TOP TV

8.00pm The World's Most Expensive Presents

MORNING

7.20am Everybody Loves Raymond
7.45am Frasier
8.40am The Big Bang Theory
9.35am The Simpsons
11.05am Holiday in Handcuffs

AFTERNOON

12.50pm Come Dine with Me
3.30pm Grand Designs
4.30pm Best Laid Plans
5.35pm Channel 4 News

EVENING

6.00pm Word of the
7.00pm Guy Martin v the Robot Car
8.00pm The World's Most Expensive Presents
9.00pm Pitch Perfect
11.10pm The Inbetweeners Movie
1.00am Tomorrow, When the War Began
2.40am The Last Leg
3.35am Hollyoaks Omnibus
5.40am Extreme Cake Makers
6.10am 3rd Rock from the Sun

Channel 5

TOP TV

5.30pm Mariah Carey's a Christmas Melody

MORNING

8.45am Noddy: Toyland Detective
8.55am Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom
9.15am Shimmer and Shine
9.30am Digby Dragon
9.45am The Gadget Show
10.45am Nativity 3: Dude, Where's My Donkey?!

AFTERNOON

12.55pm One Christmas Eve
2.40pm Love Always, Santa
4.25pm Mariah Carey's a Christmas Melody
5.25pm 5 News
5.30pm Mariah Carey's a Christmas Melody

EVENING

6.05pm Sinkholes
8.55pm 5 News Weekend
9.00pm Football on 5
10.30pm NCIS: New Orleans
12.15am Super Casino
3.10am Harrogate: A Yorkshire Christmas
4.50am House Doctor
5.15am Wildlife SOS
5.40am Chinese Food in Minutes
5.55am Access
6.00am Little Princess
6.10am Wanda and the Alien
6.20am Poppy Cat

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AN ACADEMY EVENTS PRESENTATION

Sunday December 17th

BBC 1

TOP TV

2.50pm Toy Story 2

MORNING

7.35am Match of the Day
9.00am The Andrew Marr Show
10.00am Fern Britton Meets...
11.00am Sunday Politics

AFTERNOON

12.15pm Bargain Hunt
1.00pm BBC News
1.15pm Mary Berry's Country House Secrets
2.15pm Songs of Praise
2.50pm Toy Story 2
4.20pm Blue Planet II
5.20pm BBC News
5.35pm Regional News and Weather
5.45pm Countryfile

EVENING

6.45pm Sports Personality of the Year 2017
9.00pm The Apprentice
10.00pm The Apprentice: You're Hired
11.00pm BBC News
11.20pm Regional News and Weather
11.30pm Ronny Chieng: International Student
11.55pm Weather for the Week Ahead
12.00am BBC News
6.00am Breakfast

BBC 2

7.00pm Life in Polar Bear Town with Gordon Buchanan

8.35am Countryfile
9.30am Saturday Kitchen Best Bites
11.00am Nigel Slater's 12 Tastes of Christmas
11.30am My Life on a Plate

12.15pm MOTD2 Extra
1.00pm Escape to the Country
1.30pm Equestrian
4.35pm Ski Sunday
5.20pm Nativity!

7.00pm Life in Polar Bear Town with Gordon Buchanan
8.00pm James May's Toy Stories
9.00pm The Alternativity
10.00pm Detectorists Christmas Special
10.30pm Match of the Day 2
11.30pm Insert Name Here
12.00am Roger Moore: My Word is My Bond
1.00am Question Time
2.00am Holby City
3.00am This is BBC Two
6.00am Flog it! Trade Secrets
6.30am Island Medics

ITV

12.45pm Step Up

9.55am Countrywise Winter Wonderland
10.40am The Martin Lewis Money Show
11.10am Save Money: Good Food
11.40am How to Spend it Well at Christmas with Phillip Schofield

12.40pm ITV News
12.45pm Step Up
2.50pm Midsomer Murders
4.45pm Tipping Point
5.45pm The Chase: Celebrity Special

6.45pm The Chase: The Bloopers
7.40pm ITV News London
7.50pm ITV News
8.00pm The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug
11.05pm ITV News
11.25pm Through the Keyhole
12.15am Jackpot247
3.00am Tenable
3.50am ITV Nightscreen
5.05am The Jeremy Kyle Show
6.00am Good Morning Britain

Channel 4

10.00pm Die Hard

7.05am Everybody Loves Raymond
8.25am Frasier
9.30am Sunday Brunch

12.30pm Paul Hollywood
1.00pm Jamie's Ultimate Christmas
2.05pm The Simpsons
2.35pm The Simpsons
3.05pm Jingle All the Way
4.50pm Born Silly
5.20pm Channel 4 News
5.50pm Miracle on 34th Street

8.00pm Coastal Railways with Julie Walters
9.00pm Inside Bentley: A Great British Motor Car
10.00pm Die Hard
12.35am Mercury Rising
2.25am I Origins
4.10am Location, Location, Location
5.05am Extreme Cake Makers
5.35am Countdown
6.20am 3rd Rock from the Sun

Channel 5

7.10pm Legally Blonde

9.00am Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom
9.10am Shimmer and Shine
9.30am Digby Dragon
9.45am Peppa Pig
10.00am Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
10.35am Football on 5

12.00pm Season's Greetings
1.50pm Twelve Trees of Christmas
3.35pm Our First Christmas
4.35pm 5 News
4.40pm Our First Christmas
5.20pm 5 News Weekend
5.25pm A Heavenly Christmas

7.10pm Legally Blonde
9.00pm Agatha Christie's Crooked House
10.50pm Sleepy Hollow
12.50am Criminals Caught on Camera
1.15am Super Casino
3.10am My Crazy Christmas Obsession
4.00am My Mum's Hotter Than Me!
4.50am House Doctor
5.15am Wildlife SOS
5.40am Chinese Food in Minutes
5.55am Access
6.00am Puffin Rock
6.10am Poppy Cat

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SKODA Octavia VRS 2.0 TSi (245)

Perfect for a family and for business

By **Tony Yates**

MANY people still say that Skoda is nothing more than a cheaper version of a VW – and of course I disagree with this very much, because Skoda have proved to me over the last few years that they are more than capable of standing on their own two feet and I for one now look at Skoda as an individual company which produces fantastic cars. I mean just look at the new Octavia VRS. It's an awesome car and it deserves to be right in the spotlight because it's utterly brilliant in every way.

The new Skoda Octavia is more than capable of standing on its own two feet.

Power and efficiency

The 2.0-litre TSi petrol engine has a 0-62 time of 6.4 seconds and a top speed of 155mph. Fuel consumption is also good, giving a combined figure of 42.8mpg. So, firstly, how well does it get a move on.

Basically, like a scalded Cat if I'm being honest. I'm not kidding here folks it's astonishingly quick. The vRS for me is the total sleeper car - so, be warned, if you do decide to take it on, you will almost certainly be crossing the finish line in second place.

On the road

The 245PS engine that's fitted to the vRS is enthusiastic and pretty much perfect. Also, into the corners, the chassis feels poised and tight, even when dealing with all the potholes and bumps on some of our worst roads. Plus when the tarmac gets twisty, the chassis firms up to give you maximum grip in and out of every corner. The steering also feels light, direct and is perfectly balanced with plenty of feedback on what the road beneath you is doing.

Interior & technology

First off I'm so glad to see that the designers at Skoda have paid a lot of attention to the detail inside the cabin of the vRS and thankfully it now feels more refreshing and modern than the previous vRS model I tested a while ago. Also, the seats are really comfy and the controls are well set out – plus the addition of the cabin mood lighting on the door panels is a lovely touch and something that helps soothe the mind.

On the inside; there's plenty of standard equipment, which includes dual-zone air conditioning, cruise control, acoustic rear parking sensors, Amundsen touchscreen satellite navigation system, driving mode selection (eco/comfort/sport/custom), driver fatigue sensor, electro-mechanical front locking differential, driver's seat with memory function and 19" Xtreme gloss black alloy wheels.

Plus you also get, ESC incl, EBV, MSR, ASR, EDS, HBA and DSR ESBS, TSA, MKB, XDS all as standard along with more kit than you will ever need. That's what I love about Skoda, they are not afraid to give you everything you will ever need, right there when you need it.

Space inside the Octavia is very good - easily managing to fit in a family of four. The boot space alone is also huge - and you would have no trouble at all fitting in the whole family.

Also, if you are looking to own the vRS as a business car, then go and sign on the dotted line right 'now' - before they all sell out.

To sum up

I like the Octavia vRS because its practical, fun to drive, has bags of torque and plenty of space on the inside. Big Skoda smiles here then.

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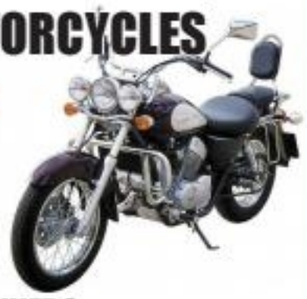

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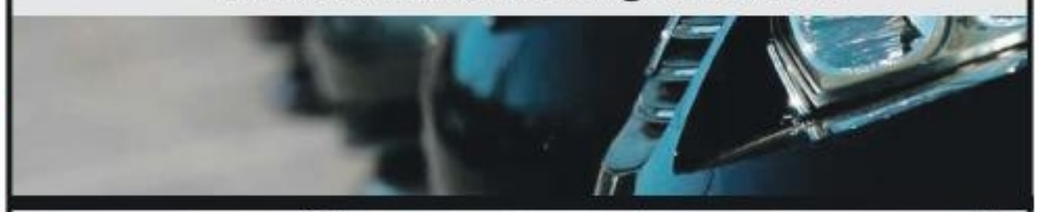

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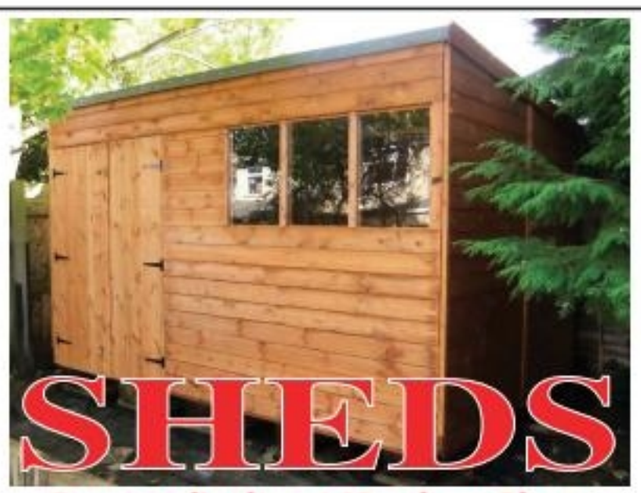

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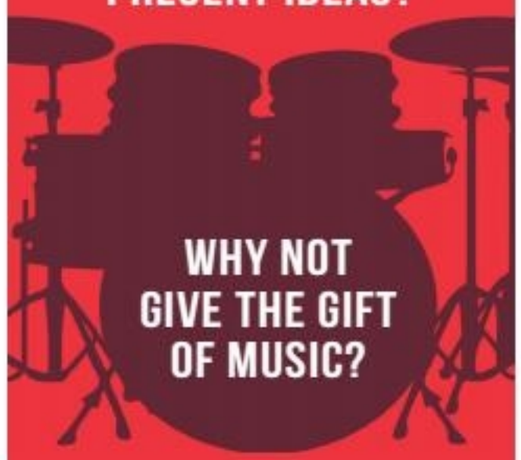

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LINO off-cut piece new top quality 2mtr x 1.7mtr green/grey fleck ideal for toilet or utility room £10 tel: 01865 762859

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SYLVIA, 44yrs, curvy busty build. Very respectful. Hoping to meet a good man to love. Call to hear more, I've lots to tell you. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3686 Box No: 429045**

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HI my name is Roy, I'm 5ft6, blue eyes, living in Newbury, looking for a lady between 50-75. I'm just lonely and looking for a relationship so give me a ring please. **Tel No: 0906 500 3686 Box No: 429111**

MALE, 65, widower, likes gardening, football, films on TV, WLTM my soul mate, I'm lonely and looking for love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3686 Box No: 429129**

HI my name is Roy, I'm 5ft6, blue eyes, living in Newbury, looking for a lady between 50-75. I'm just lonely and looking for a relationship so give me a ring please. **Tel No: 0906 500 3686 Box No: 429111**

MALE, 59, N/S, medium build, 5ft7, from Berkshire, no ties, enjoys days out, sporting events and lots more, seeking a nice lady, 30-60, who is honest and reliable, for friendship and hopefully more. If you would like to get in touch please do. **Tel No: 0906 500 3686 Box No: 428289**

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Sport

Cambridge men and women celebrate scoring tries in their respective victories over Oxford. Pictures: *Matt Impey / Wired Photography*

Double dose of Varsity Blues

By George Welch

Varsity rugby

THERE was double disappointment for Oxford University as both men's and women's teams suffered defeat in the annual Varsity matches at Twickenham last week.

The women were looking to make it back-to-back victories after their memorable win last year and a promising term's results, but ended up losing 24-0, their third Varsity without managing to cross the Cambridge try line.

The men also arrived at the home of English rugby in confident mood having won eight out of 10 fixtures this term, but failed to repeat this form on the big day and suffered their second successive Varsity loss, 20-10.

In a fiercely contested game, Cambridge's pack gained the upper hand, giving their back-line the platform to score three tries through man of the match Chris Bell, Archie Russell and Bristol full back Charlie Amesbury.

No 8 Will Wilson crossed the whitewash for Oxford but it was not enough to overcome their arch rivals in the 136th Varsity meeting between the sides.

It was a case of what could have been for the Dark Blues who had the better of the opening half but had three tries disallowed.

The Light Blues' defence was ferocious throughout as Cambridge put in a committed all-round display worthy of victory.

It was a one-sided affair in the 31st women's match as Cambridge tries from Jess Gurney, captain Lara Gibson, lively scrum half Kate Marks and winger Bluebell Nicholls were enough to reclaim the Varsity trophy.

Cambridge were utterly dominant throughout and deserved their convincing victory.

Oxford gave their all up to the last play of the game, but the Light Blues' physical dominance and their control of the conditions was too much for them to handle.

Next year's matches have been scheduled at the same venue for Thursday, December 6.

Butler helps serve up 15-point win for Wheatley

Rugby Union

LOWLY Abingdon were no match for Wheatley, who smashed their travel sick visitors 33-18 in a one-sided BBO Premier fixture on Saturday.

Toby Butler, Iain Downer and Jack Taylor all crashed over in the first half for the hosts to rack up a 21-13 half time lead.

Arron Laman increased the lead in the second half by scoring all the points himself, including converting one of his two tries.

Abingdon tries came from Jamie Lochrie and George Law.

Elsewhere in the division, Didcot won 15-8 at Hungerford to leapfrog them to seventh.

In National League 2, Chinnor remain a point clear at the top following a narrow 37-34 win at Bury St Edmunds.

Henley made it six wins from eight with a 43-28 win at home to Worthing.

In South West 1 East, Banbury made it three wins from three with a 47-22 win at Wimborne while Oxford Harlequins beat Old Centralians 27-10 at home.

There were defeats however for Witney and Grove. Witney were hammered 58-10 at leaders Old Patesians while Grove lost their 10th game of the season in a 30-25 defeat on their travels to Salisbury.

Bicester (13th) host Banbury (3rd) on Saturday, while Grove (12th) welcome Stratford (9th) to south Oxfordshire and Witney (8th) visit Oxford Harlequins (5th).

Wheatley's Jack Taylor celebrates scoring against Abingdon in their 33-18 BBO Premier win over Abingdon. Picture: *Simon Chadbone*

Thame edge closer to play offs with another victory

Evo Stik round-up

A RUTHLESS first half helped Thame United move to within five points of the Evo-Stik South East play-offs.

Hosts United were 3-0 up by the interval against Fleet Town with James McGowan (9 minutes), Luke Ricketts (16) and Lynton Goss (44) all finding the back of the net.

Dan West (63) added a fourth in the second half as United shared the goals around and cruised to a 4-0 win.

Didcot Town endured a more difficult day in the West division however, suffering a 2-0 defeat at lowly Mangotsfield and stretching their winless streak on the road to five matches.

Seth Humphries and George Reid went close early on for the Railwaymen, but the Mangos took the lead five minutes after the break as Jordan Ricketts tapped in following a defensive error.

Kane Simpson fired home with 10 minutes remaining to secure the points for the home side.

There was still time for things to get worse for Diddy as George Jeacock was shown a straight red card late on.

Kidlington suffered a second successive defeat as a late goal saw them lose 1-0 at Wimborne Town. Tobias Holmes struck in the 87th minute for the hosts.

North Leigh's home game against Yate Town on Saturday was postponed due to a frozen pitch.

The following matches were called off on Tuesday due to the adverse weather conditions: Cirencester Town v North Leigh, Shortwood United v Kidlington and Thame United v Hartley Wintney.

George Reid, pictured scoring last season, went close for Didcot early on as the Railwaymen lost 2-0 at Mangotsfield. Picture: *Roger Neal*

Vanarama National League South
Saturday 9 December
St Albans 1-1 **Oxford City**

Evo-Stik South Premier
Saturday 9 December
Banbury United 3-0 Royston Town
Tuesday 12 December
Banbury United P-P Redditch United

Evo-Stik South East
Saturday 9 December
Thame United 4-0 Fleet Town
Tuesday 12 December
Thame United P-P Hartley Wintney

Evo-Stik South West
Saturday 9 December
Mangotsfield United 2-0 **Didcot Town**
North Leigh P-P Yate Town
Wimborne Town 1-0 **Kidlington**
Tuesday 12 December
Cirencester Town P-P **North Leigh**
Shortwood United P-P **Kidlington**

Uhlsport Hellenic League Premier Division
Saturday 9 December
Brackley Town Saints 1-3 **Wantage Town**

'Lucky MP' helps Puritans claim home win at last

Banbury United

BANBURY MP Victoria Prentis proved to be the lucky mascot as she watched the Puritans claim their first home win since August.

The north Oxfordshire politician met supporters and sponsors while, on the pitch, Banbury United dismantled mid-table Royston Town 3-0.

Second half goals from Conor McDonagh, Leam Howards and Jefferson Louis earned United maximum points for the second game running as they extended their unbeaten league run to six games.

McDonagh missed a first half penalty but the strikers were clinical after the break.

McDonagh netted his 13th goal of the season while Howards made it five for the campaign as United recorded back-to-back wins for the first time since October.

United's match at Redditch United on Tuesday was postponed due to a snow covered pitch. The game has been rearranged for Tuesday, January 16.

Banbury, who climbed a position to eighth following their win against Royston, host third-placed Weymouth on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the club has added a former Benfica academy player to their ranks.

Portuguese left back Nuno Felix joined the Banbury Plant Hire Community Stadium side following his departure from Chippenham Town last week.

The 27-year-old, a regular in the Bluebirds' Southern League Championship winning side last season, has previously played for Taunton Town, Clevedon Town, Yate Town and Bridgwater Town.

City battle till to the end to earn a deserved draw

By George Welch

OXFORD City extended their National League South unbeaten run to six games with a battling 1-1 draw at playoff-hunting St Albans.

The Hoops dominated the first half and went in at the break a goal to the good thanks to a Rob Sinclair opener mid-way through the first half.

However, the home side controlled the second period and Sam Merson scored a deserved equaliser three minutes from the end.

The draw was a fair result according to Hoops boss Mark Jones, whose side have scooped 12 points from their last six matches.

Jones said: "If you look at the balance of play a draw was probably a fair result.

"In the first half we were the better side. We dominated and went in 1-0 up and we could have had more.

"We were in control of the game [but] I don't think we had that control in the second half."

Jones changed the shape at half time to prevent the St Albans full backs getting forward.

Although it didn't earn maximum points, the gaffer stressed it's a point gained away from home and that his side would take it and move on.

Jones admitted his players looked leggy following a jam-packed last couple of months but refused to criticise any of his players following the resurgence in form.

He said: "Today [against St Albans] you could see second half we were really starting to struggle physically.

"The lads have put a lot of effort in over the last month. We were battling away to the end trying to get there [but] we couldn't quite get the clean sheet and the three points.

"I'm not going to criticise any of our players because they've worked incredibly hard for us."

City have the weekend off and their next game won't be until Saturday, December 23 when they host Hampton & Richmond Borough.

Jones added: "We've got two weeks until our next game and it's an opportunity to get the right type of training into the lads.

"It's not a bad thing to have a bit of a break before the Christmas games."

Rob Sinclair, pictured earlier in the season, got City up and running against St Albans on Saturday. Picture: *Michael Allen*

Fergie's fury over added time

A SEETHING Darren Ferguson bemoaned his side's luck as he slated the referee for adding too much stoppage time in Saturday's game.

The furious Doncaster Rovers chief laid into the officials after Josh Ruffels struck in the 96th minute to send Rovers home pointless.

Ferguson, angered that six minutes was played when only three was added on, told The Yorkshire Post: "The game should be finished by the time they put it into the net, and it's painful in the dressing room because we want to go out and win.

"The performance was really good and so that's a hard one to take.

"We've been very unfortunate. My job is to keep the players positive, but its painful for me too.

"It's a very sore one to take, it's a game we shouldn't have lost and we will have to learn from it."

It was one of several complaints Ferguson had about the game and he demanded an explanation from referee Sebastian Stockbridge after the game.

The former Peterborough United and Preston North End boss also felt the ball went out of play in the build up to the Oxford penalty, which he felt wasn't a penalty.

Indeed, the foul on Jack Payne for the penalty did seem to happen outside the box.

However, the time added on was a minimum of three minutes and the game paused in injury time as Doncaster player Harry Toffolo received treatment.

Ferguson added: "Unfortunately the officials have let us down. Their performance was not good enough."

New MD 'part of a bright future'

A NEW managing director has been appointed as Oxford United continue to reshuffle their off-the-pitch staff.

Niall McWilliams is the new man in the building and will work alongside the club's finance director to help efficiency at the club.

He has worked alongside the club in his current role as the executive headteacher at The Oxford Academy and John Henry Newman Academy. He will continue these roles on a part-time basis.

Chairman Darryl Eales was pleased to welcome McWilliams to the club.

He said: "Niall is already well known to many people across the club and brings a wealth of complex leadership experience as well as an in-depth local knowledge, especially grass roots football and connections with local institutions.

"Although a Celtic fan by birth, Niall is a passionate supporter of OUFC and will bring his work ethic, enthusiasm and continuous improvement focus to the benefit of the club."

The appointment follows the recent re-appointment of Richard Blackmore as head of club operations and the promotion of Claire Theobald to commercial and retail operations manager.

Eales said these changes "mean that we have strength in depth across club operations and we will continue to drive continuous improvement and greater efficiency across the club".

McWilliams, who said it was an "honour" to join the club, added: "Darryl and the staff behind the scenes have worked so hard in moving every area forward and I want to be part of a very bright future here."

SkyBet League 1		GP	GD	PTS
1	Wigan Athletic	20	26	45
2	Shrewsbury Town	20	13	41
3	Blackburn Rovers	20	18	40
4	Bradford City	21	8	39
5	Scunthorpe United	21	11	38
6	Charlton Athletic	20	5	35
7	Portsmouth	21	2	32
8	Oxford United	21	8	30
9	Rotherham United	21	4	29
10	Peterborough United	21	1	29
11	Walsall	20	0	28
12	Southend United	21	-8	28
13	Blackpool	21	-2	27
14	Fleetwood Town	21	-3	27
15	Bristol Rovers	21	-4	27
16	Oldham Athletic	21	-4	26
17	MK Dons	21	-7	25
18	Doncaster Rovers	21	-5	23
19	Rochdale	20	-5	20
20	AFC Wimbledon	20	-7	20
21	Gillingham	21	-8	20
22	Plymouth Argyle	21	-13	20
23	Northampton Town	21	-21	19
24	Bury Town	20	-9	17

Agony for United with injury-time loss

OUFCW

GOALKEEPER Demi Lambourne believes Oxford United Women should have claimed all three points as their 2017 ended in defeat at London Bees.

Destiney Toussaint's late winner for the Londoners at a wintry Hive extended United's winless run to eight games.

U's stopper Lambourne said: "We're really disappointed. We wanted to get a win to round off 2017 but it wasn't to be. Late on they put the pressure on, and I made a few good saves. We created some chances too but we didn't put it away. It's three points lost.

"The end product just wasn't there, and their goalkeeper, fair play to her, she made some great saves as well.

"I don't think the draw would have been fair, we'd have liked to have get the win, and it's bad when you lose like that."

The Bees took an early lead through a deft Paula Howells free-kick but the U's were level midway through the first half.

The equaliser came in farcical fashion as Oxford's top scorer Kayleigh Hines' low shot skidded through Nicola Hobbs' hands, through her legs and trickled over the line.

Toussaint grabbed the win for the hosts however with a last-ditch strike in the dying seconds of injury time, sliding the ball past Lambourne.

Fifth-placed Oxford's next game will be January 7 when they host Durham Women (2nd).

Freds win again as they keep pressure up

Hellenic round-up

WANTAGE Town extended their unbeaten run to six matches with a 3-1 win at Brackley Town Saints.

The win made it three wins on the spin for the Freds, who took the lead four minutes into first half stoppage time.

Jim Glover got the deserved opener and team-mate Steve Robertson doubled the away side's advantage shortly after the restart.

Levi Steele pulled a goal back for the Brackley development side with nine minutes remaining – but Wantage quickly dashed any hopes of a Saints comeback three minutes later.

Robertson grabbed his second of the afternoon to secure the three points and keep the pressure on at the top of the Hellenic premier division.

Fourth-placed Wantage are 12 points off league leaders Highworth Town but are only two points behind Thatcham Town in second, which this season has a chance of promotion (12 of the 14 runners-up at step five will be promoted).

The Freds host Windsor (11th) on Saturday as they continue to hunt down that second spot.

Oxford City Nomads and Abingdon United had the week off but are in Challenge Cup action this weekend.

The Nomads travel to Moreton Rangers on Friday before Ardley United welcome Bracknell Town to north Oxfordshire and Abingdon visit Lydney Town in the same competition on Saturday.

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More sport inside: United: New MD at Kassam and Fergie's time woes | City: Good run continues | Rugby: Oxford defeat in Varsity matches

Josh Ruffels powers home Oxford's extra time winner to push his side up to eighth in the table
Picture: *Steve Daniels*

U's late, late, late show

By George Welch

Oxford United 1

Josh Ruffels 90+6

Doncaster Rovers 0

Attendance: 6,711 (462 away)

PEP Clotet hailed his side's never-say-die attitude as Oxford United left it late – very late – to squeeze past Doncaster Rovers.

Having snatched a 92nd minute winner against Gillingham in the Checkatrade Trophy the previous week, Clotet's men left it even later at the Kassam on Saturday.

The U's had Josh Ruffels to thank as he riffled home from 30 yards on 96 minutes to bag his fifth goal of the season in a 1-0 win for his boyhood club.

The last-gasp winner came after Jack Payne missed a second half penalty and Doncaster's Tommy Rowe saw an effort strike the inside of the post before perilously trickling along the line and away from danger.

"It shows how determined the team is to fight until the last breath of the game and show the commitment to the club, themselves and the fans to fight to the last moment," Clotet said.

"Despite having missed the penalty, the team kept working against a tough opposition who managed to play well – they caused a lot of problems with our build up play and we couldn't find that fluent game we normally have.

"Despite that, the players showed lots of character [to get the winner]."

United recorded back-to-back wins (in all competitions) for only the second time this season as they climbed two positions to eighth in the Sky Bet League One table.

Clotet, who said it was "justice" for the hard working Ruffels to net the winner, added: "We got the three points that maybe we missed in other games so I'm delighted for the boys who did a really good job and have learnt a lot of lessons.

"There's a fantastic atmosphere within the squad and club. Everyone is working hard to move the club forward and the only way to do that is to take small steps in the right direction."

The U's, five points off the play-offs, travel to Rochdale (19th) on Saturday.

Following last week's draw, they will travel to Charlton Athletic on January 9 in the third round of the Checkatrade Trophy.

'I just thought why not as I struck the ball in final seconds'

MATCH winner Josh Ruffels savoured the limelight after driving home a 96th minute 30-yarder to score his first winning goal in style.

The midfielder struck the back of the net with a superb long-range strike deep into injury time to snatch the three points and end a run of three successive home defeats.

"It was pretty special. I can't remember ever scoring so late before," Oxford-born Ruffels said.

"I'd had a couple of similar chances but played it wide, but this time I just thought 'it's the final seconds of the game; why not?' I concentrated on striking it properly and it has just crept inside the post."

The goal came despite Ruffels being asked to play in a slightly different position in the midfield.

He said: "I was in a different role – just a bit deeper to try and make sure the defence was nice and tight, so I didn't get forward as much as usual. But I managed to get that one opportunity and thankfully I took it."

United had a stroke of luck when Rovers hit the post in the second half with the ball rolling to safety after travelling across the face of goal, but they could also have won it earlier on when awarded a penalty.

Ruffels said: "Moments like that have to go your way. If so you have to then take advantage.

"For the penalty I was way back from the play but didn't actually think it was inside.

"Unfortunately Jack didn't put it away but he can owe me a drink for the goal!"

United now have three wins from their last five games as they approach the busiest time of the season.

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